

लाल बहादुर शास्त्री प्रशासन अकादमी  
Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy of Administration

मसूरी  
MUSSOORIE

पुस्तकालय  
LIBRARY

अवाप्ति संख्या

Accession No.

115833  
JD 1535

वर्ग संख्या

Class No.

954.025

पुस्तक संख्या

Book No.

Koh

A SHORT HISTORY OF  
**AKBAR**  
AND MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA

*By*  
P. KOHLI  
Revised by  
K. Nanda, M.A.,  
Ramjas College, Delhi.

**S. CHAND & Co.**  
PUBLISHERS  
Fountain — DELHI.

*Published by G. S. Sharma,  
Manager, for S. Chand and Co.  
Fountain ... DELHI*

*First Published 1949.*

*Printed by I. C. Vats, B.A.,  
at Swatantra Bharat Press,  
223, Kucha Butaqui Begum,  
Esplanade Road, Delhi.*

# CONTENTS

## PART I

<i>Chapter.</i>	<i>Pages.</i>
I. AKBAR'S ACCESSION.—Akbar's Birth and Childhood, Achievements of Humayun, Death of Humayun, Accession of Akbar to the Throne.	1-6
II. Political and Economic Condition of India and the Second Battle of Panipat, Rebellion of Shah Abu Mali, Second Battle of Panipat, Hemu, Execution of Tardi Beg, Importance of the Battle of Panipat.	7-17
III. Fall of Bairam Khan and Rule of Harem Party, Appointment of Sheikh Gadai, Arrogance of Bairam, Execution of the Elephant Driver, Lack of Private Purse, Conspiracy against Akbar, Intrigues of the Harem Party, The Rule of Harem Party, Expedition to Malwa, End of Maham Anga's Rule.	18-30
IV. AKBAR'S CONQUESTS.—Annexation of Gwalior and Jaunpur, Conquest of Gondwana, Conquest of Chittor, Visit to Ajmer, Birth of Prince Salim, Conquest of	



<i>Chapter.</i>	<i>Pages.</i>
Ranthambhor and Kalinjar, Submission of Jodhpur and Bikaner, Conquest of Gujarat, Conquest of Bihar and Bengal, War with Mewar, Battle of Haldighat, Conquest of Kashmir, Conquest of Sindh, Conquest of Deccan.	31-49
V. AKBAR'S REFORMS.—Jaziya, Sati System, Marriage Reforms, Enslavement of Children, Regulations for Branding Horses, The Jagir System, Reorganization of the Mint, A Review of Reforms.	50-58
VI. AKBAR'S PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTRATION.	59-66
VII. AKBAR'S PERSONALITY.—Dr. Vincent Smith's Accusations.	67-73
VIII. AKBAR'S RELIGIOUS POLICY. Bhakti Movement, Contact with Hindu Princes, Bigotry of the Ulemas, Influence of Jainism, Influence of Zoroastrianism, Influence of Hinduism, Sufism, Debates at Ibadatkhana, Infallibility Decree, Reading of the Khutba, Execution of the Decree.	74-86
IX. DIN-I-ILAH.—Causes of the failure of the Divine Faith, Dr. Vincent Smith's Views, Views of	

<i>Chapter.</i>	<i>Pages.</i>
Lawrence Binyon, Views of Badauni. Lane Pool's Opinion, G. B. Malleson on the Religious Policy, Dr. Ishwari Parsad's View, Sir Woolseley Haig and Henry Beveridge.	87-107
X. AKBAR AND THE JESUITS. Emperor's contact with the Europeans, Emperor and the Jesuits, The first Jesuit Mission, Jesuits' Discussions with the Emperor, Was Emperor a Christian? Failure of the Mission, Father Monserrate, Second Jesuit Mission, Third Jesuit Mission, Accounts of the Jesuits.	108-120
XI. AKBAR'S MARRIAGES AND HIS FAMILY.—Rani Jodha Bai, The Imperial Harem, Akbar's Children, Akbar's Relation with Prince Salim, Rebellion of Prince Salim, The Historical Romance of Salim and Anarkali, Death of Akbar.	121-132
XII. GENERAL FEATURES OF MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION.	133-139
XIII. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION. The King, the Central Government, The Vakil, The Bakshi Pay Master, The Khan-i-Zaman, The	

<i>Chapter.</i>	<i>Pages.</i>
Censor of Public Morals, The Chief Sadar, The Chief Kazi, Buyutat.	140-149
<b>XIV. PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION.</b> —The Subahdar, Limitations of his Powers, The Provincial Diwan, Duties of a Foujdar, The Kotwal, The News Reporters, Waqai Nawis, Sawanih Nigar, The Harkaras, Means of Sending Letters.	150-158
<b>XV. LAND REVENUE.</b> —The Agriculturists, Early Revenue Measures of Akbar, Todar Mal and the Revenue Settlement of Gujarat, Todar Mal's Bandobast, Table of Land Revenue of the Mughals, Views of Lane Pool on Revenue Assessment, Oldham's Proposition, Views of Badauni and Abul Fazal, Vincent Smith's Criticism, Views of Ishwari Parsad and Sir Jadunath Sircar, The Revenue Officials, The Krori, The Amil, Qanungo, The Finance Department or the Vizarat, Classification of Land, Jaziya as a Financial Measure, The Imperial Treasury, Diwan-e-Sadat.	159-179
<b>XVI. LAW AND JUSTICE.</b> —Emperor as the Judge, The Kazis, Law and its Sources.	180-186

*Chapter.**Pages.*

- XVII. MUGHAL ARMY.**—Divisions of the Mughal Army, The Mansabdari System, System of Paying Salaries, Sawar Troops, Dakhilis, Ahdis, Artillery, Archery, Arrangement in the Battlefields, An Estimate of the Mughal Army, Two Historians. Dr. Vincent Smith and Dr. Ishwari Parsad. 187-195

- XVIII. THE ESCHEAT SYSTEM.**—Bait-ul-Mal. 196-199

## PART II

- I. ART CULTURE AND SOCIETY OF THE MUGHALS.**—Literature—Historical Literature, Ain-i-Akbari and Akbarnamah, Muntakhab ul-Tawarikh, Tabakat-i-Akbari, Tawarikh-i-Humayun, Babar's Memoirs, Jahangir's Memoirs, Translations, Hindi Literature, Abdur Rahim Khan Khana, Keshav Das, Tulsi Das and Surdas, Sanskrit and Persian. 200-212
- II. PAINTING.**—The Muhammadan School of Painting, Mughal School, Technique, Form and Style of the Mughal School, The Deccan School, Different Kalms, Painting under the Later Mughals, The

<i>Chapter.</i>	<i>Pages.</i>
Imperial Library, The Rajput School, A Verdict by Percy Brown.	213-222
III. MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE.— Influence of Hinduism, Akbar The Great Builder, Irrelevant Criticism of Dr. Vincent Smith, Architecture under the Later Mughals, Fergusson's Theory.	222-229
IV. TRADE AND COMMERCE.—	230-234
V. SOCIETY.—The Aristocracy, The Middle Class, The Low Class, Moreland's Verdict, Position of the Women, Court Life, Construction of Hindu Society and the Influence of Islam, Amalgamation of the two cultures, Hinduism Versus Islam, Spirit of the Age and a Comparison.	235-247

## AKBAR'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

**Akbar's Birth.**—According to Jawhar, “Akbar was born on Saturday, Shaban 14. The moon of the 14th night is called Badar. So prince Muhammad Akbar Ghazi, the full moon of the faith of the world, the illumination of both the worlds came into the house. The titles Jalalud-din and Badrud-din convey the same meaning.”<sup>1</sup>

Gulbadan Begum, Humayun's sister, however, has given a different date. She consulted Hamida Banu, Akbar's mother, while writing the book. According to her, Akbar was born on Sunday, the 4th of Rajab, 949 A.H. (1542 A.D.). Dr. Vincent Smith is of the opinion that the date given by Jawhar is a correct one, as he says it was the custom amongst the Muslims to hide the exact date of birth so in his opinion the official date was transferred to the 5th of Rajab. Banerji in his history of “*Humayun Padsha*” contradicts this, and holds that the date given by Gulbadan Begum is the correct one as he says, Hamida Banu could not have possibly forgotten the date of Akbar's birth when Gulbadan Begum consulted her.

Akbar was born under most auspicious stars at 2 o'clock at night. Immediately his horoscopes were prepared by four different experts in astrology, one by Maulana Chand, another one by Jalik Rai, and the other two by Azduddaula Fathullah Shirazi and Maulana Ilyas. "Akbar," writes Banerji, "was born under such a combination of stars which one supposed to happen once in thousand years."—Humayun was not present at that time. He had gone to Amarkot—where the happy news was conveyed by Tardi Beg. To celebrate the auspicious occasion Humayun assembled the nobles around him and a darbar was held. Prayers were offered to the Almighty, and the musicians sang songs in honour of the celebrations. Humayun broke a pod of musk on a china plate and distributed it amongst his friends.

Humayun had dreamt the birth of his son, and a saint Ahmad Jain Zhanda instructed him to name and call the child by the name of Muhammad Jalaluddin Akbar. After his defeat at Kanauj Humayun was not sure of his position. Seeing no other refuge he decided to go to Qandhar to take shelter under his brother Askari. But love of power is a great thing, Askari wrote to Shah Hussain of Thatha, who informed him of Humayun's movements, to make him a prisoner. Under these adverse circumstances Humayun left his one-year-old

son under the gentle care of Askari's wife Sultana Begum and Shamsuddin Atka Khan, and Mahama Anga. During his absence of two years the young child was looked after with a great care.

In 1545 when Humayun returned from Iran after two years with his wife, he met his son. According to Abul Fazal, Akbar at once recognized his mother amongst the ladies that were present. The ceremony of circumcision was performed at this time. In the same year Humayun took Qandhar and Kabul from his brother Askari who fled to Sindh. Kamran made a fresh attempt to recover Kabul and Akbar was again left behind. The newly acquired territory of Badakshan was left to Sulaiman Mirza.

Akbar's schooling began at the age of five under his tutors—Mullayada Mulla Isamud-din and Maulana Bayazid. But both of them failed to create any impression on the young child and the Emperor dismissed them as being inefficient. Next was appointed Abdul Qadir, a man of great learning in history, theology and literature, to teach Akbar, who in spite of the best efforts of his newly appointed tutor showed no inclination towards studies. His father and grandfather, Babar, both were men of great literary genius, and Akbar too was endowed with a keen intellect and a wonderful memory, but in spite of all this, he remained



illiterate throughout his life. He showed great interest in outdoor sports such as hunting, riding, swimming, and archery which helped him greatly in his after-life.

At an early age of 12, Akbar showed a great tact as a commander of the Mughal forces and took an active part in his father's campaigns. All the time Humayun was very anxious for the education of his son. Banerji remarks "If Akbar could not inherit from Humayun a love for literary pursuits at least he had got from him a cosmopolitan outlook of sobriety of views, a healthy moral tone and a love for the people. A sane tradition is a noble heritage", he says, "Akbar with all his literary deficiencies, inherited from his father and grandfather their essential virtues. His policy of universal peace is a direct outcome of Babar and Humayun's policies of maintaining good relations with the neighbours. If Akbar's reign is the golden age for art and literature it was because his two predecessors had placed him on a high level."

**Achievements of Humayun.**—The death of Sher Shah was a great loss to the Afghan power. It was certain that his weak successors would not be able to hold on for a long time. His son Jalal Khan who proclaimed himself the king under the name of Salim Shah was an inefficient ruler. There was a general

disorder in the empire and his policy of suppression made the Afghan Amirs hostile to him. In 1554 Salim Shah died, and was succeeded by his son Firoz Khan who was assassinated by his uncle Mubariz, who proclaimed himself king—under the name of Muhammad Shah Adil. The mutual wars of struggle for power between his cousins Ibrahim Khan and Sikandar Sur caused chaotic conditions in the empire. Humayun, who was preparing himself to fight the Afghans marched in 1554 to recover his lost dominions, thinking that this was the most opportune moment. In the battle of Sarhind Humayun defeated the forces of Sikander Sur. Unluckily the early death of Humayun terminated his career. Though he was a man of great virtues, a delightful companion, a staunch friend, a literary genius, endowed with excellent qualities of head and heart, he was a total failure as a king. Banerji in his book "*Humayun Padsha*" remarks "Humayun with his antiquated notion of kingship and his poor sense of responsibility was unfit for moulding the destinies of medieval India. He was a kindly person of many virtues but no far regenerator of the country. He lacked one of the essential attributes of a king's capacity to lead and inspire his followers and organize the entire system of government. He left the practical details of looking after the interests

of the people to his more practical successor Akbar. Without Humayun the advent of Akbar the Great could not have been possible but in the presence of the son the father loses its virtue." Thus it was left to Akbar to mould the destinies of Hindustan in such a manner, which would give peace, security and happiness to the people and glory to the Empire.

**Death of Humayun and Accession of Akbar.**—Akbar received the sad news of the death of his father when he was going to Kalanaur. Humayun died suddenly by a fall from the top of the staircase in the palace of Delhi as he was descending from the terrace roof, on the evening of 24th January 1556 (15th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 963 A.H.) at the age of forty-eight. Tardi Beg who was the governor of Delhi at that time took the charge of all affairs in his own hands. This incident was kept concealed from the public for a period of seventeen days. Sheikh Juli was sent to Kalanaur to communicate the news to Akbar and to summon him back to Delhi. On the 11th of February the nobles of the court assembled and Khutba was read in the name of Muhammad Akbar Jalaluddin. The coronation ceremony was performed on the 14th of February, 1556. At that time Akbar was a young boy of 13 years. Bairam Khan who had already served Humayun became the regent and took the reins of government in his own hands.

## POLITICAL CONDITION OF INDIA AND THE SECOND BATTLE OF PANIPAT

In 1556 when Akbar ascended the throne, India was entirely in a state of disorder. Chaos prevailed everywhere. His father Humayun neither took any initiative, nor had any capacity or time to consolidate the conquered parts. Bairam Khan who acted as the regent during the early years had a small army under his command and had the possession of a few districts in the Punjab.

In the north-east Kabul had become independent under Akbar's half-brother Mirza Muhammad Hakim, who always kept an evil eye on the throne of Hindustan. Under a local Muhammedan chief Kashmir too had assumed its independence. The Afghan Power still remained to be crushed. After their defeat at the battle of Sarhind, Sikandar Sur, the successor of Sher Shah, was in search of every opportunity to recover back his lost possessions. In the south the Deccan states of Ahmednagar, Bijapur, Golkonda, Berar and Bidar were independent under the Muslim chiefs and were always fighting with one another. Disunited as they were, amongst themselves, they made a united stand against the powerful kingdom of Vijaya-

nagar, which was ruled by a Hindu Raja whose territory extended over the present area of Madras presidency and certain parts of Mysore, Deccan, Cuttack and Salstee. Bengal for the last two centuries was independent under the Afghan chiefs. Even before the defeat of Humayun, the Kingdom of Gujrat, which included the territory of Ahmedabad, Cambay and Surat, became a sovereign state under a Muhammedan prince of Afghan origin, who carried on an unsuccessful war against the kingdom of Malwa. The states of Gwalior, Chanderi, Marwar and Orchha, were in a position of tributaries and wanted to throw off the sovereignty of Delhi at the earliest possible opportunity. The important kingdom of Orissa which extended from the mouth of Ganges to that of Godavari, had too become independent. The Rajput chiefs, having recovered from their defeat at the hands of Babar had increased their power, influence and military resources during the reign of Humayun, who was totally ineffective to put a check to their power. The states of Bikaner and Jaisalmer, were entirely independent of the rule of Delhi. On the western coast, the Portuguese had established themselves and had the possession of a few ports like Diu and Goa.

The states which were directly under the Muslim conqueror were nominally independent

under their local chiefs. The internal administration was left to the indigenous institutions. The provincial sultan was an autocratic ruler in his own dominions. He commanded an army, in addition to the Imperial troops paid by the Delhi Sultan, and possessed an enormous influence in his court. He was the only link between the provincial and central authority. There was always a danger that a provincial chief might rebel against the central authority. The Muslim sultans were not only conquerors of territories, but they also glorified the cause of Islam in spreading the faith of their prophet by the power of their sword. The Hindu subjects were compelled to pay Jaziya and pilgrim tax. This hurt their sentiments and caused a feeling of discontentment amongst them.

The Muslim rulers continued to be alien not in their faith only but also in their culture, thoughts and manners to the bulk of Indian population. Their rule was a centralised despotism. Justice was dispensed according to the Koranic Law.

The economic condition of the masses was far from satisfactory. The burden of taxes chiefly fell upon them, while they were kept out from holding high offices in the administration of the country, which was considered the monopoly of the aristocratic class. The treat-

ment meted out to non-Muslims was still worse. There prevailed a general disorder. When Akbar ascended the throne of Delhi, he had not only to stabilise the political condition of the country, but also to reorganize its economic structure. An inexperienced lad of 13 as he was, it was difficult for him to cope with the entire work of political reconstruction without the help of his regent Bairam Khan.

**Rebellion of Shah Abu Mali.**—Among the prominent events of the earlier reign of Akbar was the rebellion of Shah Abu I Mali. Humayun had shown great favours to him in his life time. During the reign of Akbar his arrogance and pride led him to adopt an attitude of indifference towards Bairam Khan and he showed little regard for him. The regent Bairam felt greatly insulted at the behaviour of Shah Abu and issued orders that he should be taken a prisoner and beheaded. But Akbar, by nature a kind gentleman, did not want that his accession to the throne of Hindustan should be accompanied by an unworthy act of execution. Placed under the custody of Pahlawan Kal-Gaz, he was transferred to Punjab where he made a bid to escape, but was soon recaptured and taken prisoner.

**Second Battle of Panipat.**—The most deadly enemies of Akbar were the Sur

Afghans. Mubariz, after the murder of his nephew, succeeded Sher Shah under the name of Muhamad Shah Adil. Elphinstone remarks: "His character was not such as to efface the memory of his crime; he was grossly ignorant, fond of coarse debauchery and low society and was as despicable from his incapacity as he was odious for his vices." Unable to discharge the duties of administration efficiently, he left the sole charge of all the affairs of state into the hands of his capable minister Hemu.

**Hemu.**—Originally Hemu had a very humble start being a petty shopkeeper from Rewari. Previously he had gained a little experience as a superintendent under Salim Shah. A man of great courage, ability and shrewdness, he rose to an unrivalled position in the state. He was a great master of military tactics. A brave soldier in the battlefield, he had the reputation of winning many battles, and had defeated the rival of his master Ibrahim Sur. He was one of the greatest men which medieval India produced.

Having himself assumed the title of Raja Vikramaditya, he planned to overthrow the Mughal rule. After the death of Humayan, Hemu thought that Akbar was an inexperienced young boy of 13 and that this would be the most opportune moment to



attack Delhi. With an army "as numerous as the locusts and ants of the deserts", writes Frishta, "Hemu marched towards Agra." The charge of Mughal forces was entrusted to Tardi Beg to defend Delhi. Hemu conquered Gwalior and reduced Tardi Beg in such a position, that he was compelled to quit Delhi. The battle was lost for the time being.

Hemu became the master of Delhi, Agra, and Gwalior. The Mughals were terrified at the success of Hemu. Akbar, who was a young boy at that time, entrusted the sole responsibility to Bairam Khan. It was at this time, that he asked his regent to swear by the soul of his father, and by the head of his own son that he would prove faithful to the Mughal cause. All the nobles were called together for consultation. There were only two alternatives for them, either they could go back to Kabul, and from there prepare for a fresh invasion, or they could make another attempt to win back their lost possessions. The nobles advised the former course. But Bairam Khan and Akbar were both against the idea of retreat, and of clinging to a small kingdom of Kabul for help. The regent gave the lead, and it was finally decided after much controversy that Delhi must be won against all hazards. Akbar marched from Jullundur joining Tardi Beg, and took hold of Sarhind. The forces of the two met at the memorable

field of Panipat, a small town fifty-three miles to the north of Delhi. It was at this place where three most decisive battles of Indian history have been fought; a place which has the distinction of deciding the history of the nation many a time. It was here, where Babar had fought the Lodhies, and thus paved his way for laying down the first foundation-stone of a mighty empire, and exactly thirty years after, here was his grandson fighting for the same cause for which he had fought. For a moment the destiny of India hung in the balance. Hemu with a force of 50,000 cavalry, and 500 elephants attacked the Mughal force. Bairam had sent Ali Kuli Khan with ten thousand horses under his command to fight the enemy. The mighty forces of Hemu filled the Mughals with fear, as they were comparatively smaller in number. But still they did not lose their morale. Ali Kuli Khan captured a number of Hemu's guns, which he had obtained from Turkey. Before Hemu could advance forward an arrow struck his left eye and he fell down from his mount senseless. The fall of Hemu caused a great alarm in his army. When Hemu became conscious he resumed fighting with a handful of men who were there, but he was surrounded by a body of horsemen; Hemu was taken a prisoner and sent to Bairam Khan. He asked Akbar to smite the head of Hemu with a sword, and

become a Ghazi by slaying an infidel. Merciful by nature, the young king refused saying "*he is now no better than a dead man ; how can I strike him? If he had strength I would try my sword,*" Bairam Khan drew his own sword and cut off his head. The death of Hemu put an end to the hopes of Sur claimants to win the throne of Delhi. In 1557 at Mankot, Sikandar Sur surrendered himself after a long siege. Bairam treated him with kindness and allotted to him a certain territory where he died.

**Execution of Tardi Beg.**—Tardi Beg was a Turkish nobleman. During the reign of Humayun, he held a venerated place in the state. Humayun died a sudden death, and Tardi Beg himself took the reins of administration into his hands and kept the news of his death concealed from the public for full seventeen days. It was he, who was responsible for the arrangement of a bloodless succession of Akbar. Kamran, the half-brother of Akbar, was present at that time in Delhi. If he desired he could have put forward the claims of Kamran, and might have created a rebellion against Akbar, but it was by his tact and loyalty that he managed affairs in such a way, that Akbar became the undisputed successor of his father.

When Hemu attacked Delhi, Tardi Beg was entrusted with the charge of defending

the city, but to his ill-luck he could not stand against the overwhelming forces of Hemu, and so was forced to quit the battlefield. The *Mughals sustained a crushing defeat. Delhi fell into the hands of Hemu, and Tardi Beg fled to Sarhind. Bairam Khan punished Tardi Beg with death for abandoning Delhi in a haste, which was too severe an action to be undertaken.*

The execution of Tardi Beg is a matter of great controversy between different historians. The view that the execution was necessary on disciplinary grounds is presented by Vincent Smith and Frishta : Smith<sup>1</sup> remarks "The punishment although inflicted in an irregular fashion without any trial was necessary and subsequently just. It may be reasonably affirmed that the failure to punish the dereliction of Tardi Beg from his duty would have cost Akbar both his throne and life."

Frishta supports the view on the ground, that if he had not been executed by way of example, the Chaghatai officers who considered themselves on equal footing with Bairam Khan, would not have submitted to his authority.

The other view is put forward by G. B. Malleson and Ishwari Parsad who express their

---

1 Akbar, The Great Moghul.

disapproval, and say that it was a high-handed action of Bairam Khan to have adopted such a course. Though Malleson admits the fact that Tardi Beg evacuated Delhi in a haste and left the city defenceless, yet he puts forward the argument that<sup>1</sup> "an error in tactics is not a crime, he had at least brought forward a powerful reinforcement to Akbar in Sirhand." Ishwari Parsad, while admitting the force in Smiths' contention, observes: "But the manner in which Bairam brought about the murder admits of no palliation even on the ground, that the interest of the state demanded the crime."<sup>2</sup>

Jehangir in his memoirs admits the fact that there existed a personal rivalry between Tardi Beg and Bairam Khan, and so he brought about his downfall at the earliest opportunity. Their personal grievances against each other were further aggravated by religious differences as Bairam was Shia and Tardi Beg was a Sunni. Akbar, though greatly displeased with this action of the regent, yet had neither the courage, nor the will to offend Bairam Khan, whose guidance was needed at every step to mould the destinies of the empire. But the first seeds of revolt were sown in the heart of Akbar, against the high handed-

---

1 Akbar by G. B. Malleson.

2 A Short History of Muslim Rule in India.

ness of Bairam, which later on became one of the chief causes of his downfall.

**Importance of the Battle of Panipat.**—Akbar, with his triumphant army, marched from the battlefield of Panipat to the Imperial Gates of Delhi. A rousing reception was given and the respected nobles of the city came to pay their homage to the king. Indeed it was a new day for Delhi, India, and its inhabitants. Akbar proclaimed himself as the Emperor of Hindustan. It was a beginning of the rule which gave to India for a period of two centuries peace and security from external danger. It was Akbar, alien in faith, blood and character who won the hearts of his country men with his policy of absolute toleration and with the adoption of generous principles, and thus deserved his right to be called in the history of the land as “Akbar the Great.”

## FALL OF BAIRAM KHAN AND THE RULE OF HAREM PARTY

After the death of Humayun, Akbar being a minor Bairam Khan was in charge of all the affairs of the State—military, political and administrative. He had already shown his fidelity to the Mughal cause during the rule of Humayun, who married him to his niece, Sultana Begum (daughter of his sister Gulbadan Begum), in recognition of his life-long services. It was mainly through his efforts that Akbar secured for himself the throne of Delhi and won a victory over Hemu. He became the regent, the tutor, and the chief minister of Akbar ; an experienced, able, and energetic man of an outstanding character, he rose to an unrivalled position in the empire. There were nobles who considered themselves equal to Bairam. They became jealous of his power and were in search of every opportunity to bring about his downfall.

Execution of Tardi Beg was one of the first acts of Bairam which made the Emperor suspicious of his power. The nobles of the court, watching the misconduct of Bairam, felt greatly alarmed at the autocratic powers enjoyed by the regent. Akbar, too, strongly

disapproved of his action, and when he questioned Bairam Khan about it, he produced Khan Zaman as a witness to justify the execution, and tried to convince the emperor that such a stern measure was essential for maintaining the discipline of the State, and thus "obtained a sort of permission to put the guilty man to death."<sup>1</sup>

**Appointment of Sheikh Gadai.**—In the Mughal regime, the Sadar was the chief law-official in the State, who possessed an unlimited authority. He controlled all the grants and endowments made by the State. In the empire his office carried honour, dignity and pomp. Bairam Khan appointed one Shia nobleman belonging to his own community to this job. This spread discontentment amongst the Sunni nobles, who were already annoyed of his autocratic powers. Badauni says of Sheikh Gadai: "He was put on the heads of all magnates of Hindustan and Khuristan." He was exempted from observing the ceremony of homage, which was even essential for the Ulama. Bairam Khan was accused of showing excessive favours to his own flatterers. This appointment brought him discredit in the eyes of the nobles, as well as of the emperor.

**Arrogance of Bairam Khan.**—The attitude of Bairam and his haughty behaviour towards the nobles displeased the emperor.

---

1 Badauni.



Somehow the flatterers of Bairam made him believe that he was a unique personality in the empire, and that his courage, ability and administrative experience were as necessary to the young king as was the throne of Hindustan, and that he was indispensable for running successfully the administration of the country. It was here that he was greatly mistaken. Akbar, who had now attained the prime of his youth cherished high aspirations. A man of great ambition, he wanted to assume the entire responsibility himself, and put his own ideas into practice in social, political and administrative field. He was convinced that all this was not possible as long as Bairam Khan was at the helm of affairs. So it was inevitable that either Bairam should dominate Akbar or else Akbar should overthrow Bairam; it was hardly possible for both of them to go on together.

**Execution of the Elephant Driver.**—When Akbar was cherishing such ideas about making himself independent of every authority, Bairam Khan committed a blunder by putting to death Akbar's own elephant driver, on a charge that he had lost control over the royal elephant who attacked the elephants belonging to Bairam Khan. This misconduct of Bairam made the emperor furious, who became still more adamant in overthrowing the power of his regent.

**Lack of Private Purse.**—Another important reason which led Akbar to remove Bairam Khan was that he had no private purse of his own. Every grant made was sanctioned by Bairam. Akbar could not pay as lavishly to his household servants as were paid the servants of Bairam, who had the advantage of enjoying greater privileges. To some of his favourites, he granted a number of mansabs, without taking into consideration the rights of those who deserved them; Bairam had himself assumed the title of 'Ataliq' without the knowledge of the emperor.

**Conspiracy Against Akbar.**—Bairam Khan was suspected of having made secret designs to depose Akbar, and advance the claims of the son of Humayun's brother Kamran Mirza, who always kept an evil eye on the throne of Hindustan. Akbar watched the movements of Bairam with a secret eye, and thought that the exit of Bairam was essential to safeguard his own position, and thus no delay should be made in removing the protector.

**Intrigues of the Harem Party.**—Akbar had great regard for his foster-mother Maham Anga, who had nursed him during his childhood. Akbar told her of his intention of assuming the sovereignty himself. Maham Anga, who had already made a conspiracy with Mian Sharaf-ud-din and her son Adham Khan against Bairam, gradually encouraged the

young emperor in his schemes, and thus poisoned his tender mind against the services of Bairam. It is believed that Akbar's own mother Hamida Banu also joined the conspiracy, but we are lacking in material to give a definite judgment, whether she participated in it, or not. Maham Anga was very cautious in her designs, as she feared the power of Bairam who had the charge of the entire army as well as of the administration. A plan was made, Maham Anga pretended to be ill at Delhi. When Akbar came to see her, she asked for permission to go on pilgrimage to Mecca, on the pretext that she feared the resentment of Bairam and of his unfaithfulness. In spite of all the shrewdness and tact, Bairam failed to comprehend what was going on behind the curtain. His fortunes had taken an adverse turn, and when his friends sounded him of the future designs of Akbar, he paid little attention, until he came to know of the regulation issued by Akbar that henceforth no regulation should be enforced unless it had been duly sanctified by him. At the same time he sent his tutor Mir Abul-i-Latif with the following dispatch to Bairam :

“As I was assured of your honesty and fidelity, I left all important affairs of the State in your charge and thought only of my own pleasure. I have now determined to take the reins of government into my own hands

and it is desirable that you should make the pilgrimage to Mecca upon which you have been so long intent. A suitable jagir out of the parganas of Hindustan will be assigned for your maintenance the revenue of which shall be transmitted to you by your agent." When Bairam received the dispatch he immediately sent one Tasu Muhammad Khan and Khwaja Amin-ud-din, who were in the good books of the emperor, with his message of goodwill and submission, thinking that he might be able to make up his relations with Akbar. At the same time he conveyed that he wished to pay his homage to the emperor. The nobles who were keenly interested in the downfall of Bairam advised Akbar not to grant an interview at this juncture for his own safety, as there was every possibility of Bairam turning a traitor. After much deliberation it was decided that Akbar should proceed to Lahore, and if at all Bairam pursues for an interview and reaches there, in that case Akbar should take a journey to Kabul. It was conveyed through Tasu Khan that the Emperor was not prepared to see him under any circumstances.

Bairam Khan felt greatly disgusted at the attitude of the emperor, and once he made up his mind to join Bahadur Khan against whom he had sent an expedition to Malwa and spend his whole life-time there. Another

time he thought of joining Ali Quli Khan by way of Sambal and from there make his way to Afghanistan, collect an army there and then give a fight to Akbar. The friends of Bairam, specially Sheikh Gadai, advised him to rise into an open rebellion and give the stiffest resistance possible. But all these plans he gave up one by one in favour of making a pilgrimage to Mecca. He declined to be stamped with a mark of traitor against the Mughal regime for which he had given his whole life. But in his heart of hearts he held crooked designs to take revenge. He sent Iskander Afghan's son Ghazi Khan Tamu so that he might cause a rebellion there. Determined to subdue him, Akbar sent the following note to Bairam: "You have taken counsel with a faction which has been the source of this trouble. You have given Iskander's son Ghazi Khan leave to depart so that he may make disturbances in the court. Though we are certain that as you are perfectly loyal, you never of your own accord assented to any of these acts nor were the author of them, and that a faction has been the cause of these errors and has brought matters so far, yet you yourself said that 'it was impossible that after 40 years of service with all that loyalty and devotion and after receiving such honours and favours I should in this last stage of life convert a name which by the favour of this

glorious family had been famous throughout the earth for loyalty and fidelity into that of a rebel and not be ashamed before one's God'. As you are still dear to us in spite of these troubles and unseemly and improper actions, and we wish your welfare. .... You should adhere to the resolution of going to the sacred places..... We shall be mindful of your former services and show you more and more favours. It is by the infamy of that gang that your name has been made a bad one among the people." In order to finish the matter within the shortest possible time, Akbar sent Pir Muhammad, who was originally a religious teacher, with an armed force to send Bairam to Mecca, or to put it into Badauni's words 'to pack him off as quickly as possible to Mecca without giving him any time for delay'. Lane Pool describes it as "a courteous form of temporary banishment". Bairam felt greatly insulted at the treatment offered, as Pir Muhammad had been dismissed by him during his regency, and when he heard of the disgrace of Bairam he came back to the court and was distinguished with the title of Khan. Bairam decided to rise into a revolt. Accordingly, he left his wife and adopted son in the fortress of Taharhind near Sarsa district and himself went to Punjab to fight with Akbar. His small forces were defeated near Jullundur, his son

deserted him and he fled towards the hills of Siwalik for his own safety. From there he sent the following message through one Jamal Khan: "I deeply repent my deeds which have not been entirely under my own control but if I am favoured with the royal clemency, I will throw the veil of oblivion over my misdeeds and will present myself in your presence and hope for your forgiveness." Thinking of the meritorious services rendered by Bairam, Akbar pardoned his misconduct and received him with all the royal honour to the imperial court. He was granted liberal allowances for his maintenance. Bairam decided to go to Mecca *via* Nahrwala, the ancient capital of Gujarat, which was at that time under the possession of an Afghan ruler. He treated him with utmost hospitality, but unluckily he did not make any provision for his safety. Bairam was murdered by one Mubarak Khan who avenged the death of his father who was killed in the battle of Machiwarra, when Bairam Khan was in the command. His family was pursued by a gang of Afghans and his camp was plundered. It was with extreme difficulty that they managed to escape to Ahmedabad.

Akbar married Sultana Salima Begum, the widow of Bairam, and assumed the guardianship of his four-year-old son Abdur Rahim, who became one of the greatest nobles of the Mughal

Court and was distinguished with the title of Khan-i-Khanam. This is the sad end of one of the greatest figures of Mughal history. Badauni, the greatest critic of Akbar's rule, praises Bairam in the highest terms. He says : 'In wisdom, generosity, sincerity, goodness of disposition, submissiveness, humility, he surpassed all. The second conquest of Hindustan and the building up of the Empire were due to his strenuous efforts, his valour and his wise policy.' Without the help of Bairam Akbar could never have won the throne of Delhi. This is a fact which is admitted by every historian of Akbar's reign. If Akbar had not sent Pir Muhammed, Bairam would never have risen into a revolt and would have submitted to his fate silently.

Sir Woolsey Haig<sup>1</sup> remarks on the downfall of Bairam: "It was chiefly due to Bairam that Akbar owed his throne. It was inevitable that a young man of Akbar's force of character should emerge from a state of tutelage, but he would have done well to wait for he was not yet fit to assume the sole charge of his empire and remained for four years more under the pernicious influence of the harem party. The means by which he escaped from Bairam's influence were probably the best which he could have adopted, but the insults and ungenerous treatment which drove the protector

---

1 History of India.



into a rebellion would be a blot upon his memory were it not certain that they originated with Bairam's bitterest enemy in the harem party."

**The Rule of Harem Party.**—Maham Anga was the spirit behind the downfall of Bairam Khan. She was the foster-mother of Akbar and nursed him during Hamida Banu's absence. Once she risked her own life to protect Akbar against gun-fire and Akbar had great regards for her.

After the downfall of Bairam, from 1560-64 Maham Anga took the reins of government into her own hands. Akbar who was at that time only 18 years of age continued to occupy himself as usual with outdoor sports and hunting excursions. Vincent Smith<sup>1</sup> says: "Akbar shook off the tutelage of Bairam only to bring himself under the monstrous regiment of unscrupulous woman." He is of the view that the only object of Maham Anga was to push forward the claims of her son Adham Khan. This statement has been contradicted by another historian Ishwari Parsad who says that during the regime of Maham Anga, Adham Khan was in no way benefited. He received neither any allowances, nor any jagir was granted to him. Further he points out that if she had really dominated Akbar, Adham would never have

---

1 Akbar, the Great Mughal.

died a cruel death and most probably Bairam Khan would have received a similar punishment at the hands of Akbar, as Maham Anga was his worst enemy, and she would have been too pleased if Akbar had punished him with death. But we find that even after his rebellion Akbar treated him with the greatest consideration. So, in the light of these arguments, Smith's statement does not appear to be correct.

Maham Anga showed favour to unworthy persons and misused her powers to a great extent. She herself was a corrupt woman and during her rule there was general disorder and the officials embezzled the State revenue.

**Expedition to Malwa.**—The important feature of her reign was that an expedition was sent under Adham Khan and Pir Mohammed to reduce Baz Bahadur, the ruler of Malwa, into subjection. Unable to resist the power of Mughals he fled away leaving behind his famous Hindu Mistress Rupmati and large amount of booty which was misappropriated by Adham Khan. He tried to bring Rupmati to his harem but she took poison and saved her honour. When Akbar came to know of his actions he marched in person to punish him. Maham Anga sent a note of warning of the displeasure of the emperor, and when Akbar reached Malwa Adham laid before him all the spoils which he had gathered together. He was reconciled

with Adham Khan for a short period but he pursued the matter that the two mistresses of Baz Bahadur which were retained by Adham Khan must be recovered at all cost. Maham Anga thought that if the two women would be found out the misconduct of her son would come into the limelight and so she ordered that they should be put to death. It was most cruel of Maham Anga to have resorted to such an evil action to save her son from being punished.

**End of Maham Anga's Rule.**—The worst misfortune fell upon the mother and son when Adham Khan in a fit of rage assassinated his associate Shams-ud-din Atga, the prime minister. This action finally brought out Akbar from the clutches of the harem party. Akbar was furious at this crime and he ordered that the assassin's hands and feet should be tied down and he should be thrown over the parapet. Adham Khan well paid the price for his crime. Maham Anga unable to bear the shock died forty days after the death of her son. Thus ended the regime of Maham Anga and her associates.

## AKBAR'S CONQUESTS

### **Annexation of Gwalior and Jaunpur, 1558.**

**Gwalior.**—In 1558-60, the province of Gwalior was annexed to the Imperial dominions. The fort of Gwalior is one of the strongest fortresses of Central India and it was the abode of distinguished Rajas. The ruling chief, Sultan Muhammed Adil, had placed it under the charge of his servant Suhail. When Delhi and Agra were occupied, Akbar sent Khan Kiya Khan with two other generals to conquer the State. He acquired little territory round the neighbourhood of Gwalior and got a base to strengthen his position. Suhail, who was a shrewd man by nature, judged that his forces would not be able to stand against the mighty arms of the Mughals. So he sold the fort to the former ruling chief Ram Shah. Kiya Khan, the Mughal general, made a vigorous attack and occupied it without any strong resistance in 1559.

**Jaunpur** had been the capital of *Sharqi* kings. When Akbar ascended the throne it was in the possession of Afghan kings. After Gwalior was annexed the Emperor sent Khan Zaman to reduce it into subjection. In 1560,

it was conquered and annexed to the Mughal dominions.

**Conquest of Gondwana (1564).**—Gondwana which formed northern part of the Central Provinces was ruled by Rani Durgawati as the regent of her minor son, Bir Narayan. She was the princess of the Chandel dynasty of Mahoba, and was married to Gonda Raja. After the death of her husband she took the charge of administration into her own hands. She was a woman of great courage and ability, and was well versed in the art of fighting. Under her charge she had a cavalry of 20,000 and 1,000 elephants. Many a times she had contests with Baz Bahadur, the ruler of Malwa.

Akbar entrusted the charge of conquering Gondwana to Asaf Khan, the governor of Kara, who first sent emissaries into her country on some pretext or another and when he came to know the peculiarities of the place, he marched with his army and plundered the country and captured great treasures. An arrow struck the eye of Rani Durgawati while she was fighting. When she saw that there was no other alternative except to surrender herself to the enemies she committed suicide by plunging a dagger into her stomach. Such was the heroic end of a great woman of medieval history who has left behind legacies of valour, courage and determination. Vincent Smith remarks: 'Akbar's attack on a princess

so noble was mere aggression wholly unprovoked and devoid of all justification other than the lust of conquest and plunder."

**Conquest of Chittor, (1567)**—In 1567 Akbar decided to bring under his subjection the whole of Rajputana. Raja Behari Lal of Amber offered his submission and entered into matrimonial alliances with the emperor by giving his daughter in marriage. But the Rana of Mewar who detested the idea showed no such intention. Moreover the emperor was annoyed with the Rana for having given shelter to Baz Bahadur after his flight from Malwa and having assisted the revolt of the Mirzas. The Rana's son, Shakti Singh, who was not on good terms with his father had come to Akbar but when he came to know of the sinister designs of the emperor he fled from the imperial court and informed his father of the intentions of the emperor. The news of Shakti Singh's departure reached the ears of Akbar and he decided that Chittor should be won against all hazards.

Rana Uday Singh, the ruler, was an inefficient and weak one. Historian Tod<sup>1</sup> remarks: "It was the ill fate of Mewar to be cursed with a craven prince at the critical moment when India was ruled by the ablest and perhaps the most ambitious sovereign who

---

<sup>1</sup> Annals of Rajasthan.

has ever swayed her sceptre. Uday Singh had not one quality of a sovereign; and wanting martial virtue, the common heritage of his race, he was destitute to all..... Well had it been for Mewar had the poniard fulfilled its intention and had the annals never recorded the name of Uday Singh in the catalogue of the princes.”

In 1567 on the 20th October when Akbar reached Chittor with his army the Rana was advised by his chiefs to go to the hills. He left 1000 men under the command of two most famous warriors Jeymal and Patta. The former had already distinguished himself against the fight with Mirza Sharaf-ud-din Hussian. The fight was a pitched one. At a time it became difficult for Akbar to save his own life. It was at this time when he took a vow that if God would grant him victory he would undertake a pilgrimage on foot to the shrine of Sheikh Moin-ud-din Chisti at Ajmer. The Rajputs who were great warriors defended the honour of Mewar gallantly. Jeymal and Patta whose names are even now remembered with pride in the history of Mewar died fighting. When the emperor entered the gates of the city he ordered a general massacre. It is believed that nearly 30,000 people died in the battle.

Akbar erected in the palace gardens fine statues in honour of the two brave Rajput

soldiers Jeymal and Patta. Vincent Smith says: "One of the facts gratifying to national vanity which helped to heal the wounds of the Rajput heart was the erection of fine statues in honour of Jeymal and Patta, the defenders of Chittor."

Asaf Khan was appointed the governor and the emperor after a brief stay of three days left for Ajmer.

**Visit to Ajmer.**—After the victory of Chittor, the emperor started to fulfil his vow to the shrine of Khwaja Chishti who was a venerated saint of his time. On the 7th Ramzan 1568 Akbar reached Ajmer, where he bestowed alms on the poor and needy and after a stay of ten days he left for Delhi.

**Birth of Prince Salim.**—Akbar had great respect and affection for Sheikh Chishti. Every year he paid a visit to Ajmer. This time he took a vow that if he would be blessed with a son, he would again make a pilgrimage to Ajmer on foot. Earlier Akbar had twin sons, Hassan and Hussain, who died in their infancy. This time the holy saint promised Akbar a son that would survive. In 1569, the emperor came to know that his Hindu wife, the princess of Jodhpur, was expecting a child so he arranged that the confinement should take place at Fatehpur Sikri at the house of Sheikh Chishti. On the 30th of August, 1569, a son was born



who was named after the holy saint Salim Chishti. Even till this day the shrine at Ajner is considered a place of pilgrimage for both Hindus and Muslims alike.

**Conquest of Ranthambhor and Kalinjar (1569).**—The fort of Ranthambhor is one of the famous fortresses of India. The emperor decided to bring the two, one of Ranthambhor and other of Kalinjar under his sway. In February 1569, Akbar marched with his troops into the country. Rai Surjan Singh, the ruler of the country, seeing the powerful force of the Mughals submitted respectfully and sent his two sons, Bhoj and Dudh, to settle the terms. The emperor received them with great kindness and they became adherents to the Mughal throne.

After the campaign of Ranthambhor was over, the Emperor sent Majnu Khan to Kalinjar in Bundelkhand to reduce it into subjection. Its ruler Raja Ram Chandra was shrewd and a prudent man. He sent his envoys to the emperor wishing to become his ally. Akbar issued a friendly *farman* to the Raja and an honourable settlement was arrived at and the fortress of Kalinjar was taken.

Both with Ranthambhor and Kalinjar a treaty was made mediated by the Amber Raja was highly an honourable one. The

annals of Bundi record the terms of treaty which give a very fair picture of the sentiments of the Bundel Rajputs in those days.

(1) The chiefs of Bundelkhand were exempted from observing the custom of sending a bride to the imperial harem. This they regarded a black mark on their fame and honour. (2) They were exempted from paying Jaziya or poll tax. (3) It was an usual custom on the festival of New year day (Nawroz) that a Mina Bazar was held at the royal palace and the wives of the chief nobles of the court were supposed to be present. But according to this treaty they were exempted from this obligation. (4) The horses of the Bundels were not to be branded with the royal mark. (5) They were not to be subordinate to any Muslim leader. (6) They were permitted to beat their drums in the streets of Delhi as far as the Red Gate. (7) They were guaranteed that Bundi would remain the capital of Hara Rajas.

**Submission of Jodhpur and Bikaner.**—Early in the year Akbar went to Rajputana and received the homage of Raja Kalyan Mal and his son Rai Singh. In those days Kalyan Mal was one of the powerful rulers in Rajputana. The emperor was much impressed with their loyalty and married his daughter Rani Jodhabai. He stayed at Nagor

for a few days where Raja Chander Sen came to pay his allegiance. But the campaigns of Rajputana were not complete as long as Partap Singh, the most formidable and honourable foe of Akbar, was alive.

**Conquest of Gujarat.**—Gujarat was one of the richest provinces of India in Mughal days. It included the territories of Ahmedabad, Surat, Cambay, Broach, Khandesh, Karia, Rewa, Palanpur, Balsina, Mahar, Panch and Kanthia. Earlier Humayun had conquered it but lost it due to his laziness and inefficiency. Its capital Ahmedabad was one of the finest cities of the Mughal Empire. It was a great commercial city and an important centre of trade in export and import business of cloth, paper, salt and other commodities. Nominally Muzaffar Shah II was the ruler, but actually these different districts were ruled by Muslim chiefs disunited amongst themselves. Their relations were marked with feelings of enmity with one another and there was a general feeling of discontentment amongst the people.

Earlier Akbar realized that if the whole territory round Gujarat would be brought under his rule he would be able to establish a uniform system of government under a centralised authority which would be in the best interests of the people and would secure peace and security. In 1572, the Emperor sent

Mirza Muhammad Khan Atka with an army of 10,000 in advance. Muzaffar Khan and a Mughal to put up a stout resistance fled away leaving the capital undefended. Ahmedabad fell into the hands of Mughals. Akbar entrusted the charge of administration to Khan-i-Azam Aziz Koka.

The rulers of Broach, Surat and Baroda were unwilling to part with their power and gave the stiffest opposition to the emperor when he dispatched his forces. The news reached that the chief of Broach had slain an Amir who was the chief adherent of the Mughal cause. Under the command of the distinguished generals, Raja Bhagwandas, Man Singh and Sayid Muhammad Khan an attack was made on the fortress of Surat. The Mughals inflicted a crushing defeat at the battle of Sarnal which was followed by the siege of Surat. After a period of one month and 17 days the garrison surrendered being cut off from all external supplies. Akbar proclaimed himself the emperor of Western India. Thinking that his campaigns of West were successful, he left for Agra.

After a stay of few months the emperor heard the news that local rebels were harassing the country. Akbar decided to march in person and led a second expedition to Gujarat. He left Agra with a small force but this news

did not reach the rebels who were unprepared. Had the emperor desired he would have taken them unawares but those were the days of chivalry. A native historian writes: "The feeling ran through the royal ranks that it was unmanly to fall upon the enemy unawares and that they would wait till they were roused." In the fight the rebels suffered a defeat and their ring-leaders Mirza Muhammad Hussain and Ikhuzarul Mulk were imprisoned and were afterwards executed. The emperor richly rewarded those people who helped the Mughal cause. A tower of 2,000 human skulls was erected. Khwaja Ghiyas-ud-din who had rendered meritorious services in these campaigns was appointed the Diwan of Gujarat. The revenues were not paid and there prevailed a terrible confusion in the province. Raja Todar Mal, the great revenue chief, was sent to reorganize the entire system of revenue administration. A complete survey of the land was made, its output ascertained and assets settled in a short period of six months. The province yielded to the royal treasury a sum of five million rupees after deducting expenses of the administration.

**Conquests of Bihar and Bengal (1575).—**The provinces of Bihar and Bengal were ruled by the Afghan chiefs during the reign of Sher Shah. In 1564, Suleman Khan became

the ruler. The sovereignty of the Mughal emperor was acknowledged but it was nothing more than a paper agreement. No tribute was paid to the Imperial government. Suleman was succeeded by his son, Bazid, who was assassinated by his minister. Daud, his younger son, who became the ruler, was a worthless fellow and his accession caused discontentment all round. A powerful Lodhi chief rose in revolt and declared his independence seizing the fort of Rahalasard in Bihar in Shahabad District. The Lodhi chief was instructed by Akbar to keep him informed of all events. A reconciliation was made between him and Daud for a short while but Daud betrayed him and put him to death. When the governor of Jaunpur heard of this news he communicated it to the emperor.

Akbar, with his forces, led a campaign and reached Chausa *via* Ajmer. He decided to occupy Hazipur, a town opposite to Patna, first. Daud unable to wage a successful war fled across Punur. Akbar conquered Patna and the towns of Monghyr, Bhagalpur, Garhi, Tanda and the territory on the opposite side of Ganges, extending to Gour, was also occupied. The emperor became the master of Bihar and Bengal. Daud was imprisoned and beheaded. Vincent Smith rightly remarks: "The independent kingdom of Bengal which had lasted for about 250 years perished along with Daud,

the dissolute scamp, who knew nothing of the business of governing."

**War with Mewar (1576).**—After the fall of Mewar, Rana Uday Singh fled to the jungles of Rajputana and died after four years in 1572 at Gugunda. Tod, the distinguished historian of Rajasthan, remarks: "Four years, had Uday Singh survived the loss of Chittor when he expired at Gugunda at the early age of 42, yet far too long for his country's honour and welfare."

Uday Singh was succeeded by his illustrious son, Maharana Pratap Singh. At the time of his succession, he possessed no territory, no resources and no capital, but by his courage and determination he has won an imperishable name in the historic annals of Rajasthan. Even till this day his name is taken with pride in every Sisodia family. He had pledged the cause of his country's freedom or death in the battlefield.

The princes of Amber, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Bundi, one and all became the great allies of the emperor and made their position secure. Some of them entered into matrimonial alliances with Akbar, others had shown their respectful submission. But Maharana Pratap scorned the idea of making any bargain with the country's freedom. He detested those princes

who had exchanged wealth and power, with their honour and independence.

Maharana Pratap was determined to give a courageous fight to the Mughals. He established himself in the Aravalli Hills at Kumbalgarh, situated on a mountain area of the western border of Mewar (about 40 miles in the north of Udaipur). With the help of his chiefs, Pratap Singh reorganised his government and strengthened the mountain fortress of Gugunda, Kumbalgarh and prepared himself for the struggle with the Mughals.

Akbar was fully determined to crush the power of the Great Rana and lower his pride by the force of his military power, if he would not tender his respectful submission as the other chiefs of Rajasthan had done.

**Battle of Haldighat.**—The emperor sent his general Man Singh and Asaf Khan to fight the Rana. The forces of the two met at the memorable field of Haldighat. The different clans of Rajasthan, the Chauhans, the Rathors, the Jhalas, the Jagvats, the Chandavats, one and all united against the common foe. Nearly twenty thousand people guarded the pass and hill sides of Haldighat. The Rajputs advanced rank by rank but were thrown back by the countless numbers of the Mughal forces and by the action of the enemy guns. Out of the 20,000 Rajputs nearly 14,000 died in the battle-



field. Pratap Singh was advised by his chiefs to leave the battlefield. The Mughals had gained the day but the battle was long after remembered in every part of India. "For many years afterwards in Delhi, in South India, in Bengal, hoary headed Mughal warriors would pass the night regaling youthful soldiers with tales of Haldighat and the amazing deeds of Pratap Singh."<sup>1</sup> (Romesh C. Dutt).

Rana Pratap retreated into the hills and his fortresses were taken one by one, by the Mughals. But later on owing to the inability of Akbar to pursue the campaigns he was able to recover the whole of Mewar with the exception of Chittor, Mandalgarh and Ajmer. The illustrious Rana died in 1597, and was succeeded by his son Amar Singh. "Thus closed the life of a Rajput whose memory is even now idolised by every Sisodia and will continue to do so till renewed oppression shall extinguish the remaining sparks of patriotic feeling. May that day never come: yet if such be her destiny may it at least not be hastened by the arms of Britain. There is not a pass in the Alpine Aravalli that is not sanctified by some deed of Pratap—some brilliant victory or oftener more glorious defeat. Haldighat is the Thermophylæ of

---

1 Partap Singh, The Great Warrior.

Mewar; the field of Demeis and her Marathon”<sup>1</sup> (Tod).

Vincent Smith has strongly attacked Akbar for his ambitious designs. The following criticism of his is based on his dealings with the princes of Chittor. He says: “Akbar regarded prolonged opposition to his will as a heinous crime, no matter how chivalrous his opponent might be, and the opposition had been crushed by a superior force; he was not always merciful. It is probable that his clemency, when shown, often was dictated by policy rather than by any sentiment.”

**Conquest of Kashmir (1586.)**—The first expedition with a force of 5,000 men was led by Raja Bhagwandas and Ali Kuli Khan to Kashmir. It was partly a success, and partly a failure. When the Mughals reached the Bhuliyas Pass, they found that it was blockaded. The unfavourable weather, and the fall of snow cut off all the outside reinforcements, and the Imperial army was forced to make a treaty with its ruler Yusuf Khan. Akbar wholly disagreed with its terms and sent a second expedition under Muhammad Kasim Khan. Unable to offer a stout resistance, Yakub, the successor of Yusuf Khan, fled to the hills. His own chiefs deserted him. Afterwards he raised a small force to fight the Mughals but received a crushing

---

<sup>1</sup> Annals of Rajasthan.

defeat at the hands of the Mughal General Kasim Khan. Yakub and his father were taken prisoner and were sent to Bengal. Kashmir was annexed to the imperial dominions in 1586 and it was made a part of the Suba of Kabul. In 1589, Akbar himself went to Kashmir. The administration was reorganized and entrusted to the charge of Mirza Yusuf Khan Rizwi.

**Conquest of Sindh (1591).**—The provinces of Sindh, Baluchistan and Deccan were the only ones which remained outside the pale of the Mughal empire. The territory round Thatta, the southern part of Sindh, was a semi-independent State. Its ruler Jan Beg acknowledged the supremacy of the emperor, but never paid any tribute or visited the imperial court to pay his homage to the Mughal Emperor.

Akbar instructed Mirza Abdur Rahim, Khan-i-Khanam, who was the governor of Multan and Bhakkar, to lead an expedition to Sindh. The odds were heavy against the imperial army. The Sindhis had the advantage of controlling the passage. After much difficulty the Mughal forces gained a victory. Both sides suffered heavy losses. Dharu, the son of Raja Todar Mal, who took an active part in this expedition, was killed in action. The principality of Thatta and the fort of

Sehwan was taken. As a mark of submission Jan Beg offered his daughter in marriage to the son of Khan-i-Khanam and surrendered three-masted ships. The emperor treated Jan Beg with great kindness and the territory of Thatta was restored to him and he was enrolled in the imperial service as the Commander of 5,000 horses.

**Conquest of Deccan (1600).**—Deccan was the last province to be conquered. It included the territory of Ahmednagar, Bijapur, Golkanda, Berar and Bidar, which were collectively known as Behamani kingdom. From 1463-82 it was ruled by a capable ruler Muhammad Shah III. During his rule the dominions of the Behamani kingdom were considerably increased. In 1482, after his death Muhammad was succeeded by inefficient successors. As soon as his strong hand was removed the provincial governors started declaring their independence. Berar became the possession of Imad Shah dynasty which was founded by Fatah Ullah Imad Shah. Ahmednagar came under the rule of Nizam Shahi dynasty founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk. The kingdom of Bijapur was ruled by Yusuf Adil Shah and the two principalities of Golkanda and Bidar were in the hands of Qutab Shahi dynasty and Barid Shahi dynasty, respectively. Their mutual relations with one

another were marked with a spirit of enmity and rivalry. Disunited, as they were, they failed to comprehend the danger of the Mughal power.

Akbar was determined to conquer the Deccan at all cost. In 1591, he sent Faizi Mirza Masud and Khwaja Amin-ud-din to Deccan to make the rulers acknowledge his supremacy. In 1595, the affairs of Ahmednagar came to a crisis. Its ruler Burhan-ul-Mulk died and was succeeded by his son Ibrahim who was soon murdered. A young prince was made the Sultan but the nobles of Ahmednagar refused to support him and for a time a civil war seemed imminent. The party headed by Mian Manju supported the young prince but unable to suppress a rebellion he sought the help of the Mughals in Gujarat who were already anxious to find an opportunity to go to Deccan. The tide of affairs changed when Mian Manju changed his mind and was determined to make a united stand against the Mughals. Prince Murad and Abdur Rahim who were coming as his allies turned to be enemies. Ahmednagar was gallantly defended by the famous Chand Bibi, the daughter of Nizam Shah. The supplies of the Mughal forces were cut off and they were forced to enter into terms by which the Mughals were given Berar while the rest was to be retained by the grandson of Burhan Nizam Shah II. But the

terms of the treaty were not honourably kept, and a force was sent to Berar to expel the Mughals out. In the battle of Supa, the Imperial forces defeated them at the cost of heavy losses. Some three thousand men were killed in action, and Raja Ali Khan of Khandesh and Raja Ram Chander the allies of the Mughals died fighting.

In 1600 Asirgarh and Burhanpur were also taken. Adil Shah, the Sultan of Bijapur acknowledged the supremacy of the emperor and gave his daughter in marriage to prince Daniyal Mirza. Akbar became the master of Deccan and in 1602 he assumed the title as "Emperor of Deccan".

## AKBAR'S REFORMS

Akbar as a great pioneer of social reforms stands unrivalled in the history of medieval India. He had realized the very fundamental principle, that socially backward people could never be politically advanced. Through out his whole life, he strived to abolish the inhuman practices of the times, specially within Hindu society, which had no rational foundations; judged by the canons of any age, customs like Sati and child marriages were a black spot on Hindu religion, which endorsed the evil practices with religious fervour. Like the fate of all great social reformers, Akbar too was the victim of virulent criticism from that section of society, which failed to comprehend the merits and demerits of his set of reforms but which ultimately proved a great boon to the people.

**Pilgrim's Tax.**—Akbar's one great measure to win the goodwill of the bulk of the population was to repeal the Pilgrim's Tax. Earlier Afghan rulers started levying the tax on non-Muslims who went on pilgrimage to the holy places. They did not take into consideration the sentiments of a mass of population who were devoted to their religious ideals. To the

Muslim rulers they stood as 'infidels', and to them their religion was nothing better than idol worship. The result of all this was that it created a feeling of enmity and hostility in the minds of Hindu subjects against Muslim rule, and an abhorrence for the principles of their religion and administration.

Akbar, a man of cosmopolitan views, did not wish to make any distinction on religious grounds between his Hindu and Muslim subjects. He thought that if such a measure would be continued, he would be responsible for adopting a narrow policy on his part, which would forfeit his right to be called a just and great ruler. It was on his visit to Ajmer to the shrine of Khwaja Chishti that he had a chance to see the innumerable number of Hindus who had come on the holy pilgrimage. They conveyed their grievances to the emperor who held them as fully justified. In 1563, the Pilgrim's Tax was abolished. The Muslim subjects opposed the measure, putting forward that it was an unwise step on the part of the State to cut down its revenues. They argued that the Hindus were accustomed to paying this tax since a long time, and that it was a tax levied on the "superstitions of the people" who considered their sacred duty to visit the holy shrines. Akbar admitted the fact, but declined to stand as an obstacle in the way of their religious performances. The means of



transport and communications were far and scarce in those days, but in spite of all these hardships, the people were inclined to forgo all the comforts of home life in order to appease their conscience by making a pilgrimage to the far off places. The tax which was levied yielded an income of one crore of rupees, but Akbar carried out his reforms in spite of the opposition of the Muslim subjects. By adopting such a measure, he laid down the first foundation-stone of a mighty empire for which the Hindus too were ready to play an active part in its future structure.

Jeziya was another tax imposed by the Muslim rulers on the people of non-Islamic faith. Originally the tax was levied by Khalifa Omar who enforced it in three grades of 48, 24, 12 dirhams. In Sind, it was levied by Muhammad-Bin Kasim, and in Delhi by Firoz Shah Tughlak. The non-Muslims resented the tax, and thought of it as an unnecessary burden and an insult to their faith. The Muslim rulers levied the tax on two considerations. The first was that in case the Hindus pay the tax, it would yield a good income to the State and would prove a successful fiscal measure, and if they would not pay it, they would embrace the Islamic faith gradually. Infact, it was one of the greatest factors which went to tempt the Hindus to renounce the

faith of their forefathers and enjoy the royal patronage by discarding their religion.

Akbar was an advocate of widest religious toleration, and he refused to believe that Islam was in any sense superior to other religions of the universe and that if a ruler happens to be a Muslim it does not necessarily follow that his subjects should also embrace the same faith. In his opinion it was unjust to impose a tax on the 'conscientious faith of any man'. So the tax was repealed and it removed the deep-rooted bitterness in the minds of Hindu subjects against Muslim rulers.

**Sati System.**—The inhuman custom of Sati was prevalent amongst the Hindus, especially the Rajputs, by which the widow burnt herself on the funeral pyre with her husband, and if she did not voluntarily observe the custom she was forced to do so by the community. Even in 20th century if a discussion is held with orthodox Hindus they would still look back to the past days of glory when such a system was widely accepted. A community, a religion, which tolerates such horrors, which cannot stand the test of any moral or social ethics has got to go down. In fact, such a system has no parallel in the history of the world in cruelty and barbarism.

Akbar, who tested every dogma, creed or custom, with a sense of rationalism strived hard to uproot this evil. Special inspectors were appointed to keep a watch on the voluntary or forced Sati. If a woman desired to be burnt with her husband she was not to be stopped, but if she refused, her relations had no legal power to impose their will upon her.

**Marriage Reforms.**—Akbar greatly discouraged child marriages, and the system of female infanticide. A regulation was issued according to which no girl could be married before the age of fourteen, and the boy before the age of sixteen. Consent of both the parties, the bride and the bridegroom, was necessary prior to marriage. It was quite an original and novel idea in an Oriental country, where girls even at present are married without any choice of their own against all precepts of modern or Occidental society. By another regulation, no son or daughter of a noble man could be married, until the chief official of the police was informed and the correct age of both the parties was ascertained.

Two officers called Tuibegi were appointed in big towns to inquire into the circumstances of the bride and the bridegroom. The Emperor took a tax from both the parties in the celebration of a marriage which was looked

upon as an auspicious mark. In demanding the tax the circumstances of the bride and the bridegroom and of the bride's father were taken into consideration. The system of high dowries was disapproved by the emperor. Akbar condemned polygamy, though he himself was no follower of this, in the severest terms, on the ground that it ruins a man's health, happiness and tranquillity of mind.

Voluntary inter-communal marriages were encouraged on the basis that they created goodwill between the two major communities. If a Hindu woman fell in love with a Muslim, and had become a convert, her husband or guardian had the legal right to take her back. A Hindu who was forced to become a convert during his childhood had the option to go back to the religion of his forefathers at maturity, and if he desired to erect a place of worship near his house, he was not prevented from doing so.

**Enslavement of Children.**—Akbar abolished the system of the enslavement of the wife and children of the conquered people. There was to be no slave in the empire ; every one in the conquered territory was to be a free man. If the poor were forced to sell their children through hunger and poverty, and at times or afterwards had the means to repay, they could bring them back again.

**Regulations for Branding the Horses.**—In the Moghul days, cavalry was one of the most important divisions of the army. Horses of fine breed were brought by merchants to the Imperial court from Iraq, Turkey, Badakshan and Tibet. A record was kept, and the horses which were brought from foreign countries were mustered.

To overcome fraud, Shahbaz Khan, an experienced official in the Imperial service, introduced the branding regulation by which the horses belonging to the State were branded with the royal mark ناز (nazar, sight) or داغ (dagh-mark) or numeral < (seven). The horses belonging to different stables were distinguished by their price in numerals. A new mark was stamped if the horses were enlisted into higher grades. The introduction of this system caused a great deal of discontentment as it prevented fraudulent exchanges on the part of individuals. Aziz Koka and most of the court nobles were hostile to this measure and opposed it.

**The Jagir System.**—It was abolished and all the Jagirs were converted into crown lands on the advice of Raja Todar Mal. The State became its owner and collected the revenues directly. The system of paying salaries to the officers was started. This put them in direct touch with the State.

Mir Arzi, or the petition receiver, was enlisted as a permanent member of the household. Petitions, which he received from the people, were submitted to the Emperor. Trial by ordeal was abolished. A record office was set up and the proceedings of the court henceforth were to be recorded.

**Reorganisation of the Mint.**—In December, 1577, when Akbar moved his camp to Punjab, important changes were brought in the reorganisation of the mint. Hitherto, petty officials known as Chaudharis were entrusted with its management, but they failed to bring about a high standard of efficiency. With the consultation of Khwaja Shah Mansur and Raja Todar Mal, the work of the provincial mints was distributed amongst the imperial officers. Abdul Samad of Shiraz was appointed as the mint master. Following people were entrusted with the charge of provincial mints:

Raja Todar Mal	... Bengal mint;
Muzaffar Khan	... Lahore mint;
Khwaja Shah Mansur	... Jaunpur mint;
Khwaja Imad-ud-din	... Gujarat mint;
Asaf Khan	... Patna mint.

The gold used was practically pure and the coins issued were of a standard weight. Vincent Smith praises Akbar for his excellent coinage when he remarks, "Akbar deserves high credit for the excellence of his extremely

barred coinage as regards purity of metal, and fullness of weight, and artistic execution. The Mughal coinage, compared with that of Queen Elizabeth or other contemporary sovereigns in Europe, must be pronounced far superior on the whole. Akbar and his successors seem never to have yielded to the temptation of debasing the coinage in either weight or purity.”

**A Review of Reforms.**—Reviewing the reforms of Akbar in social and administrative fields, one feels that he was not only a great ruler, but a great genius in remodelling the social life of the people. Akbar has been attacked as an idealist and dreamer, but his practical achievements were no less, though they fell short of his expectations. Abul Fazal says: “He aimed at the reformation of the manners of the people.” In fact he was one of the greatest reformers of Hindu society. His place after hundreds of years was taken by the great pioneer of social reforms Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the social advancement of the country. G. B. Malleeson<sup>1</sup> writes of Akbar: “He endeavoured with as little show of authority as was possible to remove the restrictions which interfered with the well-being of the people.”

1 Akbar by G. B. Malleeson.

## AKBAR'S PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTRATION

Akbar can be called as the first national monarch of Hindustan. He was not only one of the greatest rulers in the Mughal annals, but ranks as one of the greatest sovereigns of Indian History. Babar, who came to India as a conqueror, held it only by the power of sword, rather than by any just principles of administration, justice or equanimity. Though a great conqueror, a great general, a man of iron will and determination yet his contribution to the national life of Hindustan was practically nil. Had he lived longer, he might have constituted some strong government but he could never have risen to those summits of glory which his grandson Akbar had reached. His was a military occupation of Hindustan, the possession of which was lost as soon as the strong hand of Babar was removed, and a superior military power under the rule of Sher Shah was able to establish its power. The throne of Hindustan was won and lost. It was only after the death of Sher Shah that Humayun was able to recapture his lost throne from his weak successors. He had neither the courage nor the initiative nor the ability to become a strong and efficient ruler. Banerji



writes: "Humayun with his antiquated notion of kingship and his poor sense of responsibility was unfit for moulding the destiny of medieval India. He was a kindly person of many virtues but lacked one of the essential attributes of a king's capacity to lead and inspire his followers and organize the entire system of government. He left the practical details of looking after the interest of his people to his more practical successor, Akbar. Without Humayun the advent of Akbar could not have been possible but in the presence of the son, the father loses his lustre." At an early stage Akbar had realised that his conquests of the different parts of the empire must be planned side by side with the establishment of a strong and efficient government based on the sound principles of administration. But the Government could not be strong without the active help and participation of the bulk of population which were Hindus. Hitherto, the Muslim rulers treated them as inferior to their Mohammedan subjects. They were the victims of social inequality and political injustice. The Hindus paid poll tax and Jeziya which was an insult offered to their religion and they felt as an unnecessary burden on their shoulders which they abhorred always while the Muslim subjects went scot free. This tax yielded a great income to the State. But Akbar rebelled against this idea to make distinctions on

## AKBAR'S PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTRATION

religious grounds. To abolish the tax would be a bad fiscal measure, the Muslims put forward their argument who regarded the Hindus as infidels and their religion nothing better than 'idol worship'. In spite of the opposition, Akbar repealed the tax and thereby won the confidence of the Hindus.

Akbar's matrimonial alliance with the princesses of Rajputana removed the deep-rooted bitterness in the minds of his Hindu subjects. The new brides in the harem were treated with greatest consideration. The emperor's contact with people like Raja Bhagwandas, Man Singh and Todar Mal gradually changed his whole outlook. Much impressed by their genius and chivalry, these men rose to the highest positions in the Imperial Court. Akbar thought why should such a strong and important element be made hostile and prove a permanent source of danger to the security of the empire when he could obtain their goodwill and co-operation in every field of political or social life. The emperor firmly believed that<sup>1</sup> "there could be no empire without the Rajputs, no social and political synthesis without their intelligent and active co-operation. The new body politic must contribute to the welfare of both. The emperor's lofty mind rose above the petty prejudices of his age and after much anxious thought he decided

---

<sup>1</sup> A Short History of Muslim Rule in India.

to associate the Rajputs with himself on honourable terms in his ambitious enterprises.” (Ishwari Prasad.)

The Rajputs were the martial race of the Hindus, ever ready to fight and defend their honour against the slightest humiliation or injustice. Akbar was a far-sighted man and he thought that the only two alternatives were either to crush their power or to adopt a policy of conciliation towards the Rajputs. The latter he thought would be more beneficial towards building a strong empire. So Akbar adopted those very measures which appealed best to the sentiments and ideals of the Rajputs. Thus they became his strong allies and he their best friend.

The reign of Akbar represents the golden age of the Mughal rule in India. In fact, it dawned a new era in politics of Hindustan in awakening the national consciousness amongst the people. For the first time, it gave to the Hindus and Muslims, an idea that their destinies were all marked together, with every tide that rises, and with every tide that falls. For the progress of the people, and for every advancement whether in the political, economic, or social field, the two wheels of the cart, the Muslims and the Hindus, must move together and work for their mutual benefit. Religious strife and rivalry would not give peace and contentment to the people and glory

to the empire. If, there was ever to be a rule of justice, then, no one party should dominate the other on religious grounds, and the whole administration must be based on social equality and political justice to both the communities. For the first time it gave to the Hindus an impression that they were on an equal footing with the Muslims in every sphere of life. In fact, for the time being, they found in Akbar the descendant of Timmur and Chengiz Khan, a defender of their faith against religious persecution. The Hindus thought that the days when their faith was held in contempt and scorn were dead and gone, and no longer they would be subject to the humility of Jeziya and Poll Tax, not knowing that Aurangzeb would revive the insane course of religious persecution and would undo all the work which Akbar accomplished. So many times it is argued that a second Akbar in the place of Aurangzeb would have definitely postponed the downfall of so mighty an empire for at least two centuries, if not completely avoided it. At an earlier stage Akbar fully realised that it was no use to devastate the distant provinces on the strength of military conquests like his Central Asian ancestors hand done, which if stamped, the empire would crumble down into pieces after his death. With proper consolidation and unification of the empire,

he must win the hearts of his people, identify himself with their cause, aspirations and ideals. G. B. Malleson<sup>1</sup> writes: "Penetrated with the necessity of finding a system and recognizing very gradually that such a system must be based on mutual respect and mutual toleration regarding the differences of race on religious traditions ; on the union of interests, on making it absolutely clear that the fall of the keystone to the arch meant the fall of each stone which went to build up the arch, he sought during the first 20 years of his reign, discussion with his courtiers and the learned regarding the system which would best appeal to those sentiments in the conquered race which would convey to them confidence and conviction."

Akbar's object in founding the administrative system was the greatest happiness of the people as a whole. His introduction of the revenue reform really proved a great boon to the ryots. Many institutions set up by Akbar form the basis of our present-day government with modifications. In genius of thought, character, ability, efficiency and wisdom, he can be compared to any of his contemporaries in Europe, Elizabeth or Henry IV.

Dr. Vincent Smith writes that all state-ment must practise some economy of truth,

---

1 Akbar by G. B. Malleson.

and believing in his maxim, he does not expect Akbar to be advanced in straight dealing than his contemporary European monarchs. The group of Anglo-Indian historians have accused Akbar on many grounds and often their accusations are unjust and insincere. Henry Beveridge observes: "He had by no means worked out the best and had defects of his age and race and his own idiosyncracies. If regarded as a man who marks his moral being his first care, he was inferior to the bigoted Aurangzeb. After all he was a Tarter—had Chenghiz Khan blood in his veins. He was both ruthless and self-indulgent."

We are not to judge Akbar by the standards of present-day generations. His notion of kingship fitted extremely well in the 16th century for governing so vast a kingdom. He was endowed with that essential virtue of a monarch which enabled him to command and lead his subjects, and at the same time he inspired in their mind a feeling of love, goodwill and obedience. Smith is wrong in remarking that he was more feared than loved, and the Jesuits' saying that he was the 'terror of the East.' In fact it was just the opposite of this. Akbar has been described as a mixture of "Turkish, Mughal and Persian elements," but all those fell into the background and in Akbar the people found an embodiment of their national ideals.

Tod<sup>1</sup> remarks: "Akbar was the real founder of the empire of the Mughals, the first successful conqueror of Rajput independence, to this end his virtues were powerful alliance as by his skill in the analysis of the mind and its readiest stimulation to action. He was able to gird the chord with which he bound them. To these they became familiarised by habit especially when the throne exerted its power in acts gratifying to national vanity or even in ministering to the more ignoble passions. But generations of the martial races were cut off by his sword and lustres rolled away ere his conquests were sufficiently confirmed to permit him to exercise the beneficence of his nature and obtain by the universal acclaim of the conquered the proud epithet of 'Jagat Guru' or Guardian of Mankind. He was long ranked with Shahab-ud-Din, Alam Din and other instruments of instruction and every just claim; and like these he constructed a number of (Seil) Pulpit or reading desks for the Koran from the altars of Eklinga. Yet he finally succeeded in healing the wounds which his ambition had inflicted and received from millions that meed of praise which no other of his race ever obtained."

1    Annals of Rajasthan.

## AKBAR'S PERSONALITY

Akbar, a great conqueror, an efficient administrator, a man of lofty prestige possessed a unique personality. He was of a middle stature, neither too tall nor too short, with a broad chest and a well-built strong body. He had wheat coloured complexion, and most impressive features. He possessed great vigour and physical strength, and had a great capacity to work strenuously. From his countenance he looked calm, sober, having an amiable nature. He had perfect self-control over himself and possessed all the characteristics of a gentleman. As a king he looked dignified and majestic in appearance.

Akbar was an illiterate man, and, unlike his father and grandfather, he suffered from educational deficiencies. But with all these handicaps he was endowed with that keen intellect and power of understanding which enabled him to grasp even the most intricate problems of science, administration, or war strategy. His knowledge acquired was not through any systematic course of studies so that he could hardly write his own name, but his grasp of history, philosophy, poetry, literature, theology was fairly a large one. Even Vincent Smith who seldom praises the emperor



admits that "a man so variously accomplished cannot be considered illiterate one in reality. Anybody who heard him arguing with acuteness and lucidity on a subject of debate would accredit him with wide literary knowledge and profound erudition and could never have suspected of illiteracy."<sup>1</sup>

He was gifted with a wonderful memory and had an abiding interest in all intellectual matters. In the discussions held at Ibadat-khana, he actively participated and tried to understand with an unprejudiced mind the viewpoint of every party.

He was a man of simple habits, methodical and energetic in his work. He looked into the details of every branch of administration. There was no such institution which had not received the master touches of the Great Man. He hated pride, conceit and arrogance, himself being above all these things. He was chivalrous in his deeds. Once he saved a woman who was to be burnt with her husband on a funeral pyre against her wishes. He was far from being treacherous; when Bairam Khan asked him to slay Hemu with a sword he refused bluntly saying: "He is already dead." He was widely known for his justice; cases of most complicated character were brought to him and people had an abiding faith in his judgment. He used to say "If

---

<sup>1</sup> Akbar The Great Mughal.

I were guilty of an unjust act, I would rise in judgment against myself." Merciful, kind and considerate by nature, he had instructed that capital punishment should not be inflicted until the authorities concerned had received from him the confirmation order for the third time. Rarely he lost his temper, but when he was angry his wrath was great though short-lived.

From his earliest childhood he was greatly interested in outdoor sports and hunting excursions. He loved to watch elephant fighting, polo, boxing contests, buffalo fighting, wrestling and flying of pigeons. He was a perfect horseman himself, a keen polo player and a great huntersman and a good swimmer.

Akbar was the lover of music, and a great patron of fine arts. The famous musician Mian Tan Sen lived in his court. Akbar himself is said to have composed many tunes. According to Abul Fazal he had acquired that knowledge of music which even trained musicians did not possess. It was the main source of entertainment in the Mughal court. Concerts and dances were held on festival occasions where the chief nobles of the court assembled. The emperor liked to hear humorous skits and short stories from the court jesters. His friend Birbal was gifted with an extraordinary sense of humour and Akbar loved to hear his witty conversations.

Even till the present day the jokes of Birbal and Akbar are current in every part of India.

Akbar took a very simple diet. In the course of 24 hours he only took one meal. Hundreds of dishes were prepared every day but he ate very moderately. Cooks were brought from foreign countries to the Imperial kitchen. There was no fixed time when he took his meals. Usually he dined alone and every possible care was taken against food poisoning. The dishes were brought tied down in linen cloth, and afterwards were sealed and sent to the palace. They were served in a special chinaware which would break immediately if touched by some poisonous matter, and in the dishes made of gold and silver. His contact with the Hindu princesses made him give up the use of onion and garlic. After the formation of Divine Faith he abstained from eating meat totally. He drank very moderately. Jehangir writes in his 'Memoirs': "Whether in cups or in sober moments he (Akbar) called me Shaikhu Baba." He drank the Ganga water always. When he was in the Punjab water was brought from Hardwar in sealed pots.

Usually the emperor's dress was very simple but on festive occasions he liked to put on exquisitely made brocade and silken garments embroidered with gold and silver thread and decked himself with pearls and diamonds.

Unlike the orthodox Muslims he shaved his beard and kept a moustache. He liked the Spanish dress and sometimes wore it in private. He always carried arms with himself whether he was in court, or outside, or in his private apartment. He was always surrounded by a bodyguard of twenty men.

On ceremonial occasions, the emperor liked to display the magnificence, splendour and glory of the State. To impress his people he sat surrounded by his nobles and chiefs all gorgeously dressed. He possessed innumerable elephants and a thousands of riding horses most of which were brought from Arabia.

Akbar's three palaces were magnificently built. In structure, architecture and design they surpassed the royal dwellings of the contemporary Western monarchs. The emperor's palace was the largest and the other two belonged to the queens and the princesses. In the evening he stood before the palace windows so that the common people may have a look at the emperor.

The daily programme of the emperor was very carefully chalked out. He did not waste his time in frivolous activities. He made himself easily accessible to the poor and heard their grievances. Audience was granted to the chiefs and nobles of the court every day. He was a sincerely religious man and prayed

four times a day. He considered himself very humble before God. He used to say: "Although I am the master of so vast a kingdom and the appliances of the government are at my hands, yet true greatness consists in doing the will of God."

At the Mughal court there assembled the reputed poets, the musicians, the architects, and the scholars from all parts of India under the patronage of the emperor. Great encouragement was given to the indigenous arts and crafts. He visited the palace workshops very often and gave suggestions for improving the guns and in other mechanical things. The reign of Akbar does not only represent the golden age of the Mughal rule in India, but it was also the golden age of the Hindu-Muslim art. It was during the reign of Akbar that the famous poet Tulsidas lived, and wrote *Ram Charitra*, the great epic of the Hindus. Various books were translated from Sanskrit into Persian at this time. The emperor asked Badauni, the orthodox Muslim historian, to translate *Mahabharata* into Persian. He had collected a huge library where books on science, art and literature were collected.

**Smith's Accusations.**—Dr. Vincent Smith has accused Akbar for his

- (1) Ambition;
- (2) Duplicity in Statecraft;

- (3) His clemency being a matter of policy;
- (4) He assassinated his enemies secretly.

Dr. Smith has failed to realise that the contemporary Western monarchs were far more ambitious than Akbar, and in duplicity and Statecraft, Henry VIII and Elizabeth were ahead of him. No other historian has mentioned that Akbar got rid of his enemies by secret assassination. Of course the will of the emperor was everything and nothing could prevent him from doing so. But Smith has not quoted any instance to support his statement.

Smith in his writings is responsible for mud slinging on the character and religious policy of the emperor. Even Ishwari Parsad thinks that Dr. Smith has 'made disparaging remarks under the cloak of judicial impartiality'. Lawrence Benyon is also of the opinion that he is grievously unjust to the great hero and has not treated the whole subject fairly.

## AKBAR'S RELIGIOUS POLICY

**Bhakti Movement.**—Akbar was immensely affected by religious and non-religious influences of his time. Sixteenth century witnessed an age of religious renaissance in India. There was the revival of Bhakti movement. The great teachers of the age, like Ramanand, Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir and Ramanuja one and all preached the unity of God. They denounced idol worship and caste system and advocated a new cult based on the unity of God and brotherhood of man. They stressed that the barriers of caste and creed should be removed, and emphasized the highest principles of conduct, moral and ethical. Thus Akbar found himself a creature of his age.

**Contact With Hindu Princes.**—The Emperor's matrimonial alliances with the Rajputs, and his contact with people like Raja Man Singh, Bhagwandas and Todar Mal changed his narrow outlook on life, and gradually led him to adopt the principles of widest religious toleration. In fact his marriages with the Hindu princesses ushered in a new era in the political and social life of Hindustan. Lawrence Binyon<sup>1</sup> writes: "Such a marriage was the symbol of his irrevocable union with India and her destinies. He was no more the foreign invader but India's adont-

---

<sup>1</sup> Akbar by Lawrence Binyon.

ed son. The subtle influence of this Hindu marriage was fruitful of consequences.”

In the childhood his mother Hamida Banu impressed upon his tender mind the necessity and value of toleration; and so the hand that *rocked the cradle ruled the world*. Humayun too was not orthodox in his views. His Persian teacher Abdul Latif taught him the principle of Sulh-i-kull or universal toleration. The two brothers, Abul Fazal and Faizi, who were men of very liberal and cosmopolitan views had a lasting influence on Akbar. He always liked to be in their company and hear their discussions on religious and philosophical matters. Great friends of Akbar, they always cherished the idea that he should rise above the prejudices of caste, creed, or colour and proclaim the rule of social equality, political justice and prosperity for all. They were free thinkers who gradually dominated Akbar's mind and led him to believe in the principle of 'live and let live'. Man is always a creature of his circumstances, environment and so was Akbar. First his parents, then his teachers, afterwards his wife, and lastly his friends—the overpowering influence of one and all consciously or unconsciously acted and reacted on his mind and led him astray from the path of orthodox Islam.

**Bigotry of the Ulemas.**—Akbar's own inquisitive mind was ever a great searcher



after truth. He saw round him the various sects of Islam each holding its superiority over another. The Sunnies, the Shias, the Mehdivis, the Sufis all advocated different creeds. The fanaticism of the Ulema who possessed an enormous influence in the State further kept him away from Islam. His discourse with Sheikh Taj-ud-din, who was the son of Sheikh Zakriy of Ajodhai, the principal Ulema of the age, with the emperor who held that the infidels should be ever kept in fire, became another chief cause of the weakening of the emperor's faith in the commandments of Islam. Religion was made a bone of contention. Seeing the differences amongst the Ulema, the emperor got suspicious and there arose a disbelief in his mind about the truths of Islamic faith. He rebelled against the idea, that Islam was the only true religion in the world and all other religions were false. His mind wondered why should truth be confined to a new creed like Islam which was not yet even thousand years old. In the court came the learned professors of all religions and his discussions with them led him to believe that there was some good in all the religions of the world and that there were pious and virtuous men born in every race and in every age to whom we should show our respect, if not allegiance. Lane Pool writes: "To Akbar's open eyes there was truth in all faiths, but no

one creed could hold the master key of the infinite." He examined and re-examined with a critical eye the implications and the fundamentals of Islam, Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity and he found some truth in all the religions to which he could pin down his faith, but to give whole-hearted loyalty, belief and allegiance to one single religion he thought would be cheating his own conscience, as he found something or another in every religion which gave an offence to his sense of rationalism.

Islam he found too narrow and rigid a faith for his expanding soul, and Christianity as uncompromising a religion as Islam. The attitude of the Jesuits towards other religions was anything but sympathetic. Father A'quaviva wrote to the Rector of Goa: "Our ears hear nothing but the hideous name of Mahomed. In a word Mahomed is everything here. Anti-Christ reigns. In honour of this infernal monster they bend the knee, prostrate, lift up their hands give alms." All the Anglo-Indian historians have failed to publish any such comments of the Jesuits or have written anything against the uncompromising attitude of the missionaries. Perhaps such things offend their missionary zeal and sense of tolerance for other people's beliefs.

**Influence of Jainism.**—The learned teachers of Jainism, Hiravijaya Sur, who was given the

title of Jagat Guru by the emperor, Jina-chandra, Bhanu Chandra and Vijayasena acquainted Akbar with the philosophy of Jainism. Their influence was great on the life of the emperor, but to hold that he was converted to Jainism was as misunderstood a belief as that of the Jesuits that the emperor was converted to Christianity. With the help of his teacher Bhanu Chandra he went through the original scriptures written in praise of the sun worship. In the famous temple of Adivasa in Kathiawar the name of Akbar is inscribed with other saints on the temple walls in Sanskrit verses, which shows the influence of Jain philosophy on the emperor. On the advice of Jain teachers he remitted the Pilgrims' tax on the Satrunjaya Hills, released prisoners and caged birds, stopped animal slaughter and cruelty to animals, and gave orders to restrict its destruction to an extremely narrow limits possible for the existence of man. In 1593 another great teacher Sidhachandra came to the royal court. The emperor granted many concessions to the Jains.

**Influence of Zoroastrianism.**—The great teacher of the Parsi community Dastur Meherjee Rana acquainted the emperor with the principles of Zoroastrianism and Fire and Sun worship. So great was the influence on the emperor that he made his religious duty to worship the sun daily. He said there was

nothing bad to show respect to the natural elements such as sun and fire. He believed that since the sun bestowed light to all the world and gives life to all the products necessary for the existence of humanity so its worship is superior to any other kind of worship. Akbar ordered that the sacred fire should never be extinguished as it was the one light from the many lights of God's creation. He had appointed special servants to take care of it and the emperor got furious if the fire was not lighted according to his instructions. At sunset a dozen of white candles and candlesticks made of gold and silver were lighted, and brought to the emperor followed by a musician who chanted hymns in praise of God and afterwards prayed for the emperor wishing him a long and prosperous reign. The various forms of candlesticks were decorated with beautiful designs adorned with enamel work. Some of them weighed ten maunds or even more. The emperor lay prostrate before the sun in public, and in the evening he ordered that the court must rise up to show their reverence when the lamps were lighted.

**Influence of Hinduism.**—The Brahman teacher Purshottam Dev instructed Akbar in the teachings of Hindu religion and in the worship of Hindu gods such as Vishnu, Indra, Mahadeo and other Hindu goddesses. Badauni

supports the view that the emperor firmly believed in the Hindu theory of the transmigration of souls. On the festivals, he came before the public with his forehead marked like a Hindu. The Brahmans tied strings round his wrist as a mark of blessing, and it became a custom in his court. On the Shivratri day the Hindu saints and holy sages were invited to dine with the emperor. He mixed freely with the Hindus, and made friends with them. People like Raja Bhagwandas, Man Singh and Todar Mal rose to the highest positions in the State.

He collected nearly one thousand names of the Sun God in Sanskrit, wore Hindu dress, adopted the Hindu mode of worship, and stopped the slaughter of cows. He gave up the use of garlic and onions and Badauni is of the opinion that it was done mainly to please the Hindu princesses inside the harem and his other friends outside. He forced Badauni an orthodox Muslim to translate the Hindu epic Mahabharata into Persian against his will.

The emperor was told that he was the incarnation of Krishna and Rama. The Brahmans called him Jagat Guru. Holy verses written in Sanskrit by the ancient saints were brought to the emperor in which it was forecast that a great conqueror would be born who would protect the earth from all evils.

Like all Hindus, he believed in the purity of Ganges water. Some trusted persons were posted on the banks of Ganga who sent the water in sealed pots. Even when he travelled the water was supplied for drinking purposes. When the emperor remained in the Punjab water was actually brought from Hardwar.

In the harem the Hindu princesses greatly affected his mode of worship. With them he used to perform Hom ceremony which is derived from sun worship. Tolerant by nature, he freely allowed them to practise the rituals of their own religion and though himself unconscious of this it naturally made him inclined to adopt an attitude of reverence to the principles and mythology of Hindu religion.

**Sufism.**—The emperor was much attracted by the Sufi philosophy and its mysticism. His mind was ever in search of the quest as to what was the relation between the finite and the infinite. His friends Abdul Fazal and Faizi were also inclined to Sufi doctrine, but to all his likings he found the creed too vague and ambiguous. It encouraged free thought and advocated the principle of widest religious toleration. He held in great reverence Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs, and once on the advice of Guru Nanak he remitted a year's revenue in Punjab.

**Debates at Ibadatkhana.**—In 1575, the

emperor constructed Ibadatkhana, a magnificent building at Fatehpur Sikri. In the early years only the various sects of Islām were allowed to hold debates such as the Sheikhs and the Saiyids, the Ulemas and the Amirs but later on the learned professors of every community were given admittance irrespective of their caste, creed or colour. In fact it became a hall of Parliament of universal religions. The Muslims, lawyers, the Jews, the Buddhists, the Hindus, Parsis and Christians were all represented. On every Thursday night debates were held and usually there prevailed a spirit of antagonism and rivalry between the different sects. Sheikh Abdunnabi and Sheikh Makhdum-ul-Mulk were the leaders of the orthodox party, while Mubarak and his two sons represented the liberal ones. The Shias attacked the Sunnis and the Sunnis reacted with equal vigour. Each party called the other fools and heretics and denounced its principles whether right or wrong. "The differences between the two parties of the Ulemas, one of whom denounced as heretical notions declared by the other to be truth, confirmed Akbar in the opinion that both the parties were in error and the truth must be sought outside the range of their bickerings."

**Infallibility Decree.**—Akbar wondered in his mind whether it would be possible for him to form a new religion which would include

the truths of all the faiths and some such common platform be erected, where every man irrespective of his caste or community should be able to join. It was in 1579 that Sheikh Mubarak suggested to the emperor after he had completed his campaigns in Gujarat that he should become the spiritual as well as temporal head of the people. Akbar could not give his whole thought to this idea of his at that time, as his whole attention was engaged in settling the politics of North-West Frontier. But he had never quite forgotten the suggestion of his friend. The bigotry and narrowness of the Muslim community disgusted him greatly. "Instead of unity in the creed of Islam he found multiplicity of divisions" as Malleson says. Akbar decided to become the spiritual and temporal head of the people. Lane Pool<sup>1</sup> writes, "Akbar found the rigid Muslims of the court were always casting in his teeth some absolute authority, a book, a tradition, a decision of canonical order and like Henry the VIII, he resolved to cut *ground under ground*; he would himself be the head of church and there would be no Pope in India but Akbar."

Abul Fazal knew beforehand the reactions this would cause in the minds of the orthodox people, but one evening he introduced a subject for discussion in Ibadatkhana that the

---

1 History of Muslim Rule.



emperor should become the Imam of the Age. He declared "that should His Majesty think fit to issue a new order we and the nation shall likewise be bound by it provided always that such an order is not only in accordance with some verse of Koran but also of real benefit to the nation and further that any opposition on the part of the subject to such of order passed by His Majesty shall involve damnation in the world to come and loss of property and religious privileges in this." This note sounded the death-knell on the fundamentals of Islam. A document was drawn up in which Akbar was declared to be the just ruler and was given the rank of Mujtahid. Henceforward, the emperor was the arbiter in all matters civil or ecclesiastical.

**Reading of the Khutba.**—The infallibility Decree was passed. Akbar read the Khutba like the Imam of the Age. According to Badauni, Akbar trembled and fell down while reading it, while the account given by Abul Fazal is absolutely different. It would be interesting to give the whole description in Badauni's own words: "In the year 987 (Muslim era) His Majesty was anxious to unite in his person the powers of the State and those of the church; for he could not bear to be subordinate to anyone. As he had heard that the prophet, his lawful successor and some of the most powerful kings as Amir-Tuner,

Cabibquarana and Mirza Ulgh-Bagi, Gurgan and several others had themselves read the Khutba, he resolved to do the same apparently in order to imitate their example, but in reality to appear in the public as the Mujtahid of the age. Accordingly, in Juma Masjid of Fatehpur, the *Jarmad Chawwal* 987, His Majesty commenced to read the Khutba. But all at once he stammered and trembled and though assisted by others he could scarcely read the verses of poem which Sheikh Faiji had composed, came quickly down from the pulpit and handed over the duties of Imam to Hafiz Muhamad-Amir."

**Execution of the Decree.**—The draft of the document was prepared by Sheikh Mabarak. After it had been approved by Akbar it was signed by Sheikh Abdun Nabi the chief Quazi, Jalaludin the Sadar, Sheikh Mubarak and Sultan Khalifa Gazi Khan. Bandauni is of opinion that all persons signed the document unwillingly excepting Sheikh Mubarak who puts down: "This is an affair I desired with all my heart and soul and the accomplishment for which I had been waiting for years." The Ulemas wrote: "This document has been written with honest intentions for the glory of God and propagation of Islam and is signed by us the principal Ulemas and lawyers in the month of Rajab of the year 971." Now Sijdah under the name of zamin-

bosi was to be offered to the king. The superiority of the emperor was established over Muslim law, human or divine. Immediately after this Akbar expressed his intention to go on pilgrimage to Ajmer. There was a great deal of excitement among the Muslims, and they wondered to note the strange attitude of the emperor, as to how he could uphold his faith in pilgrimages when he had rejected the very foundations of Islamic principles. They said it was just like devil reading the holy scriptures. After the decree had been issued Mukbul and Abdun Nabi two most bigoted Muslims, were sent on pilgrimage to Mecca to 'refresh their fanaticism' Abul Fazal writes in his book Akbar-Nama that the document brought greatly beneficial results. Henceforth complete toleration was granted to all. The royal court became a dwelling place of the learned professors of every community. "The orthodox section of Muslim community was covered with shame on seeing the disinterested motives of His Majesty and thus stood in the pilory of disgrace."<sup>1</sup> The execution of the document put forward his idea of religious tolerance and liberty of conscience into actual practice as long as it did not endanger the security of other people; in fact it has been called the 'Magna Charta' of Akbar's reign.

---

1 Akbar by G. B. Malleson.

## DIN-I-ILLAHI

Din-i-Illahi has been described by an Indian writer, S.R. Sharma, as "the crowning expression of the emperor's national idealism". We should not expect any just accounts from the group of Anglo-Indian Historians i.e., Smith, Lane Pool and Beveridge. Their sources of information have been mainly based on the accounts of the Jesuits and on the writings of an orthodox historian Badauni, whom they have quoted as a witness of the highest value. "Being keenly disappointed in their expectation of converting the emperor, these European missionaries became too prone to give credence to statements discrediting Akbar. To cite Badauni in confirmation of the Jesuits is only to call in two prejudiced witnesses instead of one. A fair judge ought to make sure especially before coming to the consideration that the witnesses themselves are above suspicion"<sup>1</sup> —(Sharma).

Din-i-Illahi was a simple religion which recognized one God as the divine power and considered the emperor as the Imam of the Age.

1. The followers of the Divine faith were

---

1 Mughal Empire by Sharma.

to greet each other by saying "Allaho Akbar" and the other man was to respond "Jalla Jalaluhu". What Akbar meant by these words was that "God is Great" (Allah means God and Akbar means great) while the critics like Badauni who smelt everything evil in his designs accused him by saying that he meant "Akbar is great".

2. Each member was to give a dinner during his life-time instead of being given after his death and 'thus gather provisions for his last journey'.

3. A member was to celebrate his birthday anniversary by giving a feast to the poor and setting a part of his income for charitable purposes. The members could permit others to eat meat but they were to be strict vegetarians themselves and were not allowed to eat in the same utensils with the butchers, fishermen or bird-catchers. They were not even permitted to approach meat during the month of their birth.

Akbar was the prophet of the new religion and expected from them four degrees of devotion which consisted in the readiness to sacrifice to the emperor, property, life, honour and religion. Whoever, sacrificed these four things, possessed the four degrees and whoever, sacrificed one of these, possessed one degree.

The members were to discard every dogma

or creed and recognize the emperor as the only prophet.

As a religion the divine faith never became popular with the illiterate masses. It was a queer mixture of sun worship of the Hindus and fire worship of the Parsis which was further tinged by the mysticism of the Sufi philosophy.

As the head of the Church the emperor issued new regulations in 1583, 1584, 1588 and 1594. The most important of them were as follows:—

1. Public prayers of the Muslims were abolished as being too narrow to be adopted while prayers more simple and general in form were substituted so that the people of all communities may join in it.

2. Pilgrimage to Mecca was prohibited, and the people were discouraged to keep the fast of Ramzan.

3. Names, like Ahmed, Muhammad or Mustafa offended the emperor and an order was issued prohibiting the use of these names ; if the above-mentioned were already given they were to be changed. Badauni thinks that it was done with an idea to please the infidels outside and the Hindu princesses inside the harem.

4. The slaughter of animals was prohibited

on the first day of the week which the emperor considered as sacred to the sun.

5. In future no new mosques were to be erected and the older ones were not to be repaired. All of them were converted into store rooms.

6. Sijdah under the name of Zamin-bosi was to be offered to the emperor who was the prophet of the new faith.

7. 'The Era of the thousand years was marked on the coins and a Tarekh-i-Alfi commencing with the death of the prophet was to be written.'

8. The ceremony of the circumcision of Muslim boys was prohibited before the age of 12 and afterwards it was entirely left to their option.

9. Marriages between near relations were forbidden. Girls could not be married before the age of 14 and the boys before the age of 16.

10. Those Hindus who were forcibly converted to Muhammadanism were permitted to go back to their former religion.

11. The use of intoxicants was allowed if permitted by doctors. A sick person could obtain it by sending a chit to the clerk of the shop. But no mischief or impropriety was to result from its use.

12. A Darogha was appointed to register the names of the prostitutes who were allotted separate residences. People could visit them if it was within the knowledge of a toll collector.

13. The common practices of the Christian religion were daily visible such as the ringing of the bells and exhibiting the figure of the Cross.

14. The practice of forced Sati was stopped. Special inspectors were appointed to inquire into these matters. If a woman wished to be burnt with her husband she was not prevented.

It must be admitted that some of the regulations were quite absurd and foolish. It was bound to hurt the sentiments of the Muslims who were orthodox in their views. Akbar had ordered dogs and swines to be kept in the harem and he made it his religious duty to see them every morning. His intention in doing so was to remove such practices which had no rational foundations.

Most of the historians of Akbar's reign support the view, that the emperor renounced Islam and its fundamentals completely. But this statement is contradicted by Abul Fazal, who says, that Akbar did not renounce it. His was a reformed sect of Islam free from all



prejudices, recognizing that there was some truth in all religions *of the Universe*. The emperor did not force any of his friends or courtiers to embrace the new religion. It was entirely left to the will of the people to join it or not. The chief followers of the divine faith were all Muslims excepting Birbal. When Raja Bhagwandas was asked to give his opinion he totally refused to join it.

To judge Akbar, from the accounts of Abul Fazal, one is inclined to say that most probably he continued worshipping the sun and at the same time held the creed of monotheistic Parsi Hinduism. According to the Memoirs of Jehangir which have been translated by Major Price, Akbar died as a good Musalaman and repented on his death bed.

**Causes of the Failure of the Divine Faith.—** Akbar was the originator of the new faith and it died with him. He was the powerful personality behind it. Some followed him because of his power, others because of his fear and few people followed him because they really liked the religion. As soon as the great king, the little prophet, died, not a trace of the new religion was left behind. Akbar mainly relied upon his own influence and personality to affect the views of the people. He had not

appointed any proper person for the propagation of the new faith. Most of the members of Din-i-Illahi which were 18 in number died before Akbar. The few members who survived, such as Sharif-of-Amil, went back to Islam. Moreover Akbar's son Jehangir unlike him was quite indifferent to the religion of his father. The emperor's spirit of widest religious toleration had a natural death in favour of the religious persecution, set up by Aurangzeb concealed under the name of 'Glory of Islam'. Moreover Akbar had not founded the divine religion in the sense that he would become a champion of the new faith. He did not appeal to the people to discard their former religion in favour of the new one. His policy of universal toleration and liberty of conscience had made the masses entirely passive in their thought. The new religion did not reach their ears. The emperor recognized no priesthood. In forming the new religion his one foremost aim was to take from each religion its best part so that it may help in strengthening the cause of unity.

**Dr. Vincent Smith's Views.**—Dr. Smith attacks Akbar and denounces his religious policy as "the outcome of a ridiculous vanity, a monstrous growth of unrestrained autocracy—the divine faith was a monument of Akbar's folly and not his wisdom." He is of the opinion that the emperor rejected Islam,

Prophet, Koran and all the fundamental doctrines excepting monotheism and became the highest interpreter of the faith of his forefathers. Smith has accused Akbar for being hostile to the Islamic faith.

Dr. Smith and all other Anglo-Indian Historians with the exception of a few have been guilty of giving most prejudiced and false accounts of the 'Great Mughal'. They may be excused on the ground that all their writings are based on the accounts given by Badauni, the orthodox Muslim historian, whom Smith cites as a witness of highest value and the Jesuits. Both of these have misrepresented the actual facts and no other contemporary historian has supported their views.

Usually, one finds Dr. Smith very harsh and unjust while going through his accounts of Akbar. Lawrence Binyon writes about Smith's book: "A volume which has its faults and which sometimes is curiously unjust to its hero". Smith is supported by Badauni and Blackman in his views. While criticizing the religious policy of Akbar Smith forgot the ultimate goal of the emperor, the unity of the empire and widest religious toleration for all. One who goes through the whole history of the great hero with an open and unprejudiced mind would not fail to come to the decision, that the intentions of the emperor were pure

and honest, above all suspicion and hypocrisy. Enjoying the pride and superiority of the white race Smith thinks that it would not be reasonable to expect an Asian potentate like Akbar to be in advance of his European contemporaries in straight dealings. Perhaps while making this statement he most probably forgot the history of his own country. The contemporary of Akbar, Henry VIII changed his creed to change his spouse (Catherine of Aragon) and enforced on the people the Act of supremacy and uniformity. In crookedness and hypocrisy Elizabeth had no rival in the whole of Europe. At least Akbar stood far above these 'virtues'. No doubt his achievements were far behind his ideals but he gave to the people of Hindustan a sense of national unity which no Mughal ruler ever gave.

Lawrence Binyon, who treats the study of Akbar with more sympathy and understanding than Smith, observes: "But while in Europe the disputants burnt or massacred one another in their zeal and devastated whole countries in the name of religion, here in India, a restraining power prevented arguments from ending in the use of sword, here was a monarch who actually believed in toleration."<sup>1</sup> A more befitting reply could not have been given

---

1 Akbar by Lawrence Binyon.

*by an Indian critic to an English Historian. By his statement, Smith, has not only criticised Akbar, his conduct and his 'straight-dealings' but he has entirely generalised the character of the oriental people as inferior to the people of West. It is a most *partial* statement unworthy of an honest critic.*

E. B. Havell, while commenting on the religious policy of Akbar, does him 'greater justice than Smith. He writes "Akbar has shared the fate of all great reformers in having his personal character assailed, his motives impugned, his actions distorted, upon evidence which hardly bears judicial examination. He was neither an ascetic nor a saint of the conventional type, but few of the great rulers of the earth can show better record for deeds of righteousness or more honourably and consistently maintained their ideals of religious life devoted to service of the humanity. In the western sense his mission was political rather than religious, but for his endeavours to make the highest religious principles the motive power of State policy he won an imperishable name in Indian history and lifted the political ethics of Islam onto a higher plane than they had ever reached before.

"It does not detract from his greatness as a man and ruler that his achievements fall short of his ideals, that the Din-i-Illahi did not

*accomplish the spiritual regeneration of the ruling classes or wiped off the State all the records of previous centuries of misgovernment and that his schemes did not embrace the full recognition of the Aryan system of self-government upon which the economic strength and political greatness of India stood firm longer than has been the case with any other empire in the world."*

**Views of Lawrence Binyon.**—Lawrence Binyon is no authority on Akbar and his accounts are more of a biographical character than of historical. Comparatively he has given a fairer picture than Smith whom he contradicts on various points. He thinks that there was nothing bad in Akbar's assumption of being the head of the Church. His whole criticism of Akbar's conduct is marked with a sense of honesty and sincerity. He observes<sup>1</sup>: "Those who have seen in it merely self-aggrandisement and astuteness surely misread Akbar's character. The religion which was to have united all, pleased none. Moreover such is the weakness of human nature, Akbar who had revolted so often from the intolerance of his ancestral creed now imposed his own toleration by invidious ordinances against Muhammedan practices. Just as the champions of international goodwill are often found to exempt their own

---

1 Akbar by Lawrence Binyon.

country from a universal benevolence and look on it alone with a malignant eye so this descendant of the conqueror who had treated all alien creeds with fierce contempt was unraked into oppressing all the faiths, the faith in which he was bred." Binyon goes on to say that Akbar was lacking in the genius of religious leadership but failure should not make us forget his higher sublime and ultimate aim of the unification of the empire.

He is right when he says that the new faith was a failure and was destined to be a failure, because he observes that "in religious societies toleration is no virtue, it is the despised offspring of lukewarmness or difference. A creed so simple was obvious to the reproach of vagueness and emptiness."

**Views of Badauni.**—Badauni has been called "as an uncompromising critic of Akbar's innovation." His historical book entitled *Muntakhab-ul-Twarikh* gives us an important, though unfair and untrue, picture of Akbar, his character and his religious and administrative policy. Blochmann says: "It is much prized as written by an enemy of Akbar whose character in its grandness and in its failings is much more prominent than in *Akbarnama* or *Tabaqat-Akbari* or the *Masir-i-Rahimi*."

Badauni kept his writings in great secret as long as the emperor lived. It was only

after the death of Akbar that he was able to bring forth his historical accounts before the public.

Badauni was an orthodox Muslim belonging to the Sunni creed. A man who deviated very slightly from the Islamic principles was an apostate in his opinion. Bigoted by nature, he could not have possibly appreciated the tolerant views of Akbar and his good intentions he always misinterpreted. He had many personal grudges against the emperor and he lost favour in the court due to his narrow ideas. Imperfections there are in every man and Akbar was no exception to this but Badauni brought into limelight the perverted side of human nature. He has accused Akbar for having adopted a pro-Hindu policy. He did not like the idea of emperor's matrimonial alliances with the Hindus. He has attacked him vigorously for giving the Hindus the highest administrative posts forgetting that they were men of genius and character. Through his whole writings he has used the words 'infidels' and rascally Hindus. He has accused Abul Fazal and Faizi also and thought that they were guilty of poisoning Akbar's mind against Islam. His anti-Hindu views made him unpopular with most of the courtiers.

Badauni in collusion with the bigoted Mullas caricatured every principle of the divine faith and it caused a great excitement



and discontent amongst the orthodox section. Most of them thought that 'Islam was in danger' and the only possible way to save it was to rise into an open rebellion against the emperor and put his half-brother, Mirza Hakim, who was orthodox in his views, on the throne of Hindustan. The rebellion of 1581 was a futile attempt which had its natural death at the hands of Akbar who became still more adamant in the continuance of his former policy. It would be helpful to quote Badauni's writings so that the reader may get first-hand information of his views and of his hostile criticism. He says: "Some bastards such as the sons of Mulla Mubarak, a worthy disciple of Sheikh Abul Fazal, wrote treatises in order to revile and ridicule our religious practices, of course, with proofs. His Majesty likes such productions and promoted the authors." At another place he has condemned Akbar's regulations and the practices of the new faith. He observes: "As it was quite customary in those days to speak ill of the doctrine and orders of the Koran, and as Hindu wretches and Hinduised Muhammedans openly reviled our prophet, religious writers left out prefaces to their books the customary praise of the prophet and after saying some thing to the praise of God wrote eulogies of the emperor instead. It was impossible to mention the name of the prophet because

these liars (like Abul Fazal) did not like it. The wicked innovations gave general offence and sowed the seed of evil throughout the country ; but notwithstanding this a lot of low and mean fellows put piously on their necks the collar of divine faith and called themselves disciples either from fear or hope of promotion though they thought it impossible to say our creed."

About Akbar's faith in Islam he writes: "Hence His Majesty cast aside the Islamic revelation regarding resurrection, the day of judgment and the details connected with it as also ordinances based on the tradition of our prophet. He listened to every abuse which the courtiers heaped upon our glorious and pious faith which can be easily followed, and eagerly seizing such opportunities he showed in words and gestures his satisfaction at the treatment which his original religion received at their hands."

Badauni looked upon Akbar as the one who was lost to Islam. He says amidst doubts heaped upon doubts, the emperor lost his goal ; the religion in which Akbar was bred was persecuted and in his mind not a trace of Islam was left. He has been accused for having formed a religion bearing a materialistic character. Badauni has supported the view that Akbar firmly believed in the truths of Christian religion.

**Views of Lane Pool.** Lane Pool praises the high ideals of Akbar. He says that his open mind found truth in all the religions of the universe, and in order to crush the power of the Ulema he decided to become the head of the Church. Criticizing Divine Faith he does not forget the ultimate goal of the Emperor like Vincent Smith has done. On Din-i-Illahi he observes: "Of course an eclectic religion never takes hold of the people and Akbar's curiously interesting hotchpotch of philosophy, mysticism and nature worship practically died with him. But the broad-minded sympathy which inspired such a vision of Catholicity left a lasting impression upon a land of warring creeds and tribes and for a brief while created a nation where there had only been factions."<sup>1</sup> He further says that Akbar was very keen on making experiments. He has given one very curious instance when Akbar separated young children from their parents and they were locked in a room cut off from all outside influence. After a lapse of five years to his surprise he found all of them dumb, and his experiment an utter failure. Dr. Holden supports Lane Pool when he says "Akbar experimented in all departments from religion to metallurgy."

1 **Muslim Rule in India** by Lane Pool.

**Views of G. B. Malleson.** Col. G.B. Malleson is the only Anglo-Indian historian who seems to have given an exact picture of Akbar in its true colours. He has represented the facts as they are, and through his whole book one breathes a note of sincerity and impartiality. It is doubtful whether he also suffered from caste and colour prejudices like other creatures of his race, but even if he did it that did not mar his writings.

Malleson says that Akbar's one foremost aim was the union of Hindustan under one head which was difficult to achieve had he persecuted all non-Islamic religions. In order to bring about a unity, Akbar was fully convinced that "the dominant religion should not be as long as he was its interpreter the religion of the sword. It should carry, on the contrary, a healing influence throughout India; should wipe away reminiscence, should practise the most perfect toleration. To accomplish such a union it was necessary first to conquer, secondly, to respect all consciences and all methods of worshipping the Almighty. To carry out this plan he availed himself to a modified extent only of a Muhammedan ritual."<sup>1</sup>

Col. Malleson contradicts Vincent Smith, Badauni and Blochmann when they say that

---

1 Akbar by G. B. Malleson.

Akbar rejected Islam altogether. He, however, is of the opinion that he adopted the Muhammedan ritual which was a modified form of the former to carry out his policy of amalgamating the various elements, religious and political. Akbar claimed himself as the divine agent of God on earth because he felt that the precepts of the Prophet Mahomed had been misinterpreted. The Muhammedans thought that the glory of Islam lay in slaying the infidels with the power of their sword. "The writings of Mahomed misinterpreted and misapplied could only produce disunion. He then for his age and for his reign would take the place of the prophet. He would be the interpreter of the generous and merciful decrees of the one all-powerful. Regarding himself as the representative of this world of the Almighty he culled from each religion its best point so as to make religion itself a helpful agency for all others rather than an agency for the persecution of others. The broad spirit of his scheme was as much raised above the general comprehension of the people of his age as were his broad political ideas. To bring round the world to his views it was necessary that *Amurath* should succeed on *Amurath*. This was and every will be impossible. The result was that his political system gradually drifted after his death into the old narrow groove whence he had emancipated it,

whilst his religious system perished with him. After the reign of two successors, indifferent persecution once again asserted her sway to undo all the good the great and wise Akbar had effected to prepare by the decadence of the vital principle of the dynasty for the rule of a nation which would revive his immortal principle of justice to all and toleration to all."

One marks a great difference between the ideologies of the two historians Dr. Smith and Malleon. The contrast is a vast one. How much Smith differs when he says that Akbar's policy was 'a fit of frenzy and that it was the outcome of Akbar's folly not his wisdom.'

**Views of Ishwari Parsad.**—Ishwari Parsad is of the opinion that Akbar did not introduce the Divine Faith "in the spirit of missionary zeal for obtaining recruits. His object was not proselytization but a new synthesis of the warring creeds. He approached the whole question what we might call a theosophical spirit and inculcated no rigid formulas." His opinion tallies more with Malleon and Abul Fazal than with Smith or Badauni. Ishwari Parsad contradicts Smith's statement that Akbar's religious system was 'the outcome of religious vanity and a monstrous growth of unrestrained autocracy,' and observes that Smith's statement is wholly erroneous. A German historian has done more justice to the

great hero than Smith has when he says: "It was the people who made a god of the man who was the founder and head of an order at once political, philosophical and religious."

Dr. Parsad emphasises the fact that the success or the failure of the Divine Faith as a new religion is not so important a factor as are its effects on the political life of Hindustan. Whether Akbar rejected Islam totally or not, about this Dr. Parsad does not say anything. Praising the lofty and sublime ideals of the great king, he says : "He organized a brotherhood in which the intellectuals could join. It was an association of free thinkers who had transcended the barriers of sect and creed and shaken off the tyrannous yoke of age-long customs."

**Sir Woolsey Haig and Henry Beveridge.**—Haig criticizing the religious views of Akbar says : "With the aid of his advisers he had concocted an eclectic creed likely as his vanity persuaded him to command an assent from all men which neither Christianity nor Islam had been able to ensure."

Haig's criticism is not so harsh and unjust as that of Dr. Smith, but he too belongs to that group of Anglo-Indian historians who have totally failed to give a sincere interpretation of Akbar's policy. A historian who judges history and its political, economic,

social and religious movements by his own barometer of thought without taking into consideration the effects of the prevailing customs, ideas, and traditions of the people forfeits his right to be called a great and honest critic.



## AKBAR AND THE JESUITS

“To the Jesuits Akbar was at first an encouragement, then an enigma and ultimately a bitter disappointment.”

**Emperor's Contact With the Europeans.**—The Portuguese was the first European Power with whom the emperor came into contact. They had strongly established themselves on the western coast of India, for purposes of trade and commerce, and had built their fortified settlements at Goa, Bombay, Bassein, Daman and Diu. They had the monopoly of the traffic of the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf, and carried the pilgrims to Mecca.

First time the emperor met Portuguese was in 1572 at Cambay. Their aim was to create influence at the court, and get for themselves increased trade privileges. A treaty was made with the Portuguese envoy from Goa. Akbar got an assurance from them that the pilgrims going to Mecca would not be molested by the Christians in return for the trade concessions granted to them.

**Emperor and the Jesuits.**—Originally the society of the Jesuits was started by Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish nobleman in 1540. One of its main purposes was to spread the doctrine of

the Catholic Church far and wide by gaining control of education. The society commanded complete obedience from its members and through its discipline, it became a very powerful body in religious and political fields in Europe. The society sent missionaries to foreign countries especially the Far East, China and Japan.

The society of the Jesuits founded one of its branches for missionary work in India. Akbar wanted to study every religion with a critical eye. For this very purpose, he called first Father Julian Pereria, the Vicar General at Satgaon, and Pietro Tavares, the commandant of the port of Hooghly, to know the fundamentals of their religion. In spite of their best efforts they failed to give any satisfaction as far as Christianity was concerned.

**The First Jesuit Mission.**—In 1579 Akbar sent a letter to the Archbishop of Goa asking him to send two learned priests of his faith to acquaint him with the principles of Christianity. The dispatch ran as follows :—

“The commandment of Zelabdenius the great king<sup>1</sup> by God constituted. O Chief Fathers of the Order of St. Paul that we are very well disposed unto you. Abdullah our envoy and Domenic Peres that they may communicate to you in

---

1 The Jesuits and the Great Mughal.

our own words our desire that two learned priests should be sent to us to bring the chief books of the law with them. Let the priests understand that I shall receive them with all possible kindness and honour. Their arrival will be a great delight to me and when I have learnt which I long to know about the law and its perfection and salvation it offers, they shall be allowed to return as soon as they like. I shall send them back again dignified with many honours and gifts. Let them have no fear in coming. I take them under my own protection and guarantee. Farewell."

At first, there prevailed a great confusion amongst the missionaries, and they doubted the sincerity of the emperor, and wondered whether the dispatch was sent in good faith or not. Ultimately the matter was laid down before the Council of Bishops, and the Portuguese nobles and lawyers. It was argued that a Musalman should not be trusted. But the Archbishop with his Council of Bishops decided that the invitation should be accepted at all costs. The aim of the Jesuits was the 'glory of the church'. They were eager to convert the people of 'Mogor' to Christianity, Maclagan<sup>1</sup> remarks: "In view of the unsolicited invitation addressed to Goa and known

---

1 The Jesuits and the Great Mughal.

proclivities of Akbar it was ardently hoped that this object might be achieved through the medium of the conversion of the king. All the efforts of the mission were, therefore, at first concentrated on the king himself. Royal converts were not unknown in the Indies. A near relation of the Sultan of Bijapur had been baptised at Goa. There was, therefore, nothing impossible or fantastic in the scheme of the mission and as the Jesuits were admittedly the Order, best fitted to deal with such cases, the mission commenced with well founded hopes of success."

The first mission was sent on November 17, 1579, which consisted of Father Rudolf Acquaviva and two of his other companions. One of them had an excellent knowledge of Persian and the other one was Father Monserrate. On their arrival at the Mughal court the missionaries were accorded a warm reception by the emperor. Abul Fazal and Hakim Ali Gilani were instructed to look after the comforts of the guests. They were offered 800 pieces of gold which they declined to take. Akbar expressed his views that it was his desire that the Christians should live freely in his empire. They were permitted to spread the doctrines of their religion and build churches. The Fathers brought with them a copy of the Holy Bible written in four languages,

which consisted of seven volumes as a present for the emperor, which he received with a great delight. Father Monserrate mentions in his commentaries that the emperor kissed the Bible and placed it on his head.

**Jesuits' Discussions with the Emperor.**—Akbar invited the missionaries to participate in the debates which were held at Ibadatkhana and discussed the principles of their religion with the learned professors of other faiths. Sir Edward Maclagan observes: "This mission came to Akbar's court at a time of great interest in the development of his religious policy and its doings have received notice at the hands of the contemporary Indian historians, Badauni and Abul Fazal; the former writing from the orthodox Muslim standpoint and the latter from Akbar's own eclecticism." Akbar's interest in Christianity was more of an intellectual character than of a religious one. He was a scholar of universal religions, who studied with an unbiased mind the creed of every faith. At times he had heated discussions with the emperor, but to the bitter disappointment of the Jesuits, Akbar never became a convert to their faith.

One of the Jesuits reports to the authorities at Goa: "The emperor is not a Muhammedan, but is doubtful as to all forms of faith and holds firmly that there is no divinely accredited

form of faith, because he finds in all something to offend his reason and intelligence. Nevertheless, he admits at times that no faith commends itself so much to him as that of the Gospel and that when a man goes so far as to believe this to be true, he is near to adopting it. At the court, some say he is a heathen and adores the sun, other that he is Christian, others that he intends to form a new sect. Among the people also there are various opinions regarding the emperor some holding him to be a Christian, others a heathen, others a Muhammedan. The more intelligent consider him to be neither a Christian, nor a heathen, nor a Muhammedan and hold this to be the truest, or they think him to be a Muhammedan who outwardly conforms to all religions to obtain popularity."

**Was Emperor a Christian ?**—Dr. Ishwari Parsad, the India historian, contradicts Vincent Smith's statement that the contribution made by the missionaries in the debates held at Ibadatkhana was one of the important factors which led Akbar to renounce Islam. Dr. Parsad is of the opinion that the missionaries were absolutely wrong in holding the view that the emperor was willing to become a convert. The belief that the emperor firmly believed in the principles of Christianity has been supported by Badauni, and Blochmann. Badauni says that the sign of the Cross and

the ringing of the bells were the common practices that were daily visible.

The Jesuits were quite mistaken in holding that view that Akbar would have become a Christian if he had not feared a general rebellion in the country. It is greatly doubtful whether the accounts written by Father Monserrate in his commentaries of Akbar's views are correct or not, as at one place he mentions that the emperor remarked, "These things are in the hands of God, Who grants to those who ask plain paths from which they cannot stray. I myself have no desire. I reckon wives, children, empire of no account. If there is no other way of becoming a Christian without raising a tumult I will pretend that I wish to go on pilgrimage to Mecca and will go to Goa to be baptised." The fact is that Akbar might have become a convert to Christianity, but he found it as uncompromising a religion as Islam was. Like the Ulema, the missionaries were equally fanatic in their zeal for the cause of Christianity and they abused Islam and held in contempt its fundamentals. Such an attitude made the Muslims entirely hostile to them. Father Monserrate writes that Akbar remarked once: "You<sup>1</sup> have proved your case entirely to my satisfaction and I am well pleased with the

---

1 Akbar by Monserrate.

religion contained in your law, but I should advise you to be cautious in speech and action for your opponents are unscrupulous villains." To this the Fathers replied: "We will be cautious as regards the Muslim religious leaders as you advise, not because we are afraid of them for ourselves, but because we wish to obey you."

The whole efforts of the missionaries were concentrated on the emperor to convert him to Christianity. Akbar showed every courtesy to their religion, but when the missionaries asked him to become a convert, he was quite indifferent.

**Failure of the Mission.**—From the very start the missionaries carried fantastic notions about Akbar's religious views. They firmly believed that the emperor wished to become a convert, without understanding that his interest in Christianity was of a philosophical character rather than a religious one. The missionaries continued to share the royal favour, but later on difficulties arose in their way. Akbar's close association with the missionaries, Parsis, Jains, and his attempt to make himself the head of the New Faith, having assumed the title of the 'Imam', caused a great alarm in the minds of his Muslim subjects. Rebellions arose in different parts of the empire, and this led the emperor to



adopt an attitude of indifference towards the missionaries. Their uncompromising attitude and their way of openly ridiculing the Islamic religion alienated the nobles at the court. The opposition was further strengthened by the might of the whole harem. Peruschi remarks : "Akbar's numerous wives, after being repudiated, adopted an attitude of hostility towards the Christian religion." In 1582 when Akbar's mother, Hamida Banu, and his aunt Gulbadan Begum returned from pilgrimage, the opposition stiffened all the more.

**Father Monserrate.**—In Father Monserrate Akbar found a great companion. He instructed him to teach his son Prince Murad the principles of Christianity. The Gospel was translated by Abul Fazal into Persian. Father Monserrate accompanied Akbar to his campaigns to Kabul, and he wished that Monserrate should prolong his stay at the court, but being not very hopeful of the results of the mission he decided to leave. Father Acquaviva was retained and he remained at Fatehpur Sikri a little longer. But he too was recalled in 1583 by the head authorities at Goa.

**Second Jesuit Mission.**—In 1590 the emperor sent Leo Gremon as his Christian envoy to the Provincial at Goa to send learned priests of Christian law to acquaint him with the principles of their religion. The Fathers

accepted the invitation with great pleasure and sent two Portuguese missionaries, Father Edward Leiton and Christopher-di-Vega, in 1591.

Akbar received the Jesuits with great kindness, and they were given separate apartments near the palace. A school was started where the two princes, Murad and Daniyal, and the sons of other court nobles were taught Portuguese language and the principles of Christian religion. The short stay of the missionaries at the court convinced them that there was no hope of the emperor's conversion to Christianity. V. Smith<sup>1</sup> writes: "No printed record explains how, why or when exactly the mission came to an abrupt conclusion. Its members were recalled and they returned to Goa sometime in 1592. The suspicion seems justifiable that the Fathers selected were not in all respects suited for the task entrusted to them and that they might have been somewhat faint-hearted." Thus the second mission like the first one ended in a failure.

**Third Jesuit Mission.**—In 1594 Akbar sent another envoy, an American Christian, to the Provincial Viceroy at Goa, asking him to send another mission to acquaint him in the doctrines of Christianity. At first, they were rather hesitant in accepting the invitation,

---

1 Akbar, The Great Mughal.

as they knew the fate of two previous missions but afterwards the Viceroy finally decided to send the mission in the hope of obtaining "good results not merely of a religious but also of a political character." Father Jérôme Xavier, the leader of the mission, and his two companions, Father Ammanuel Pinheiro and brother Benedict-de-Goes, were sent in 1594 *via* Daman. They were honourably received by the emperor. In one of his letters Father Pinheiro writes: "Both emperor and Prince (Salim) favoured us and treated us with much kindness, and I observed that he paid to none of his own people as much attention as he paid to us, for he desired us to sit in turn upon the cushion on which he and the prince alone are wont to sit."

The missionaries were allowed to build a church and start schools for the propagation of their faith and they were successful in converting a few people to Christianity. The emperor himself listened with great attention to their discussions on the principles of their religion. Candles were burnt in honour of Christ and Virgin Mary. Prince Salim too became a firm supporter of the mission. But the Jesuits were greatly disillusioned about Akbar's faith in their religion. His attitude towards them made them feel exasperated later on. Akbar showed no signs of abandoning his practices of sun worship. The hostility of the Muslim nobles,

and the intrigues of other European nationals at the court, for securing more trade privileges for themselves, made the stay of the missionaries a difficult and an unpleasant one. The third mission too failed without securing its cherished goal of converting the emperor.

**Accounts of the Jesuits.**—The Jesuits have left a great deal of information of Akbar's reign. They were greatly prejudiced in their views about the emperor for having failed to convert him to Christianity, and most of their accounts were written in a spirit of hostility. Their writings have not been supported by any contemporary historian except Badauni. Ishwari Parsad<sup>1</sup> observes: "Their credulity is revealed in their readiness to accept the orthodox gossip that was current in Hindustan about the emperor." In spite of their fantastic notions about Akbar, Smith has attached a great importance to the Jesuit sources. At one place the Jesuits write "The emperor turned all the mosques of the city into stables for elephants or horses on the pretence of preparation for war. The sub-deacor also said that the name of Mahomed was as hated at the Mughal court as in Christendom and that the emperor had restricted himself to one wife, turning out the rest and distributing them among his courtiers."

---

1 A Short History of Muslim Rule in India.

One can himself form his independent judgment after going through their writings to which Vincent Smith has attached so much importance.

## AKBAR'S MARRIAGES AND HIS FAMILY

Sultana Raqiyat Begum was the first wife of Akbar. She was the daughter of Mirza Handal. Akbar had no issue from her, and she died at the age of 84. His second wife was Sultana Salmah Begum who was the daughter of Mirza Suruddin Muhammad and Gulbadan Begum, Humayun's sister. Earlier she was married to Bairam Khan in recognition of his services by the late emperor, but the marriage proved greatly unpopular amongst the Sunni nobles. After the death of Bairam Khan Akbar married the widow and took the guardianship of his 4-year-old son, Abdur Rahim. Salmah Begum was a poetess and wrote poetry under the name of 'Makhfi'. Akbar had no child from her and it is wrong to presume that she was the mother of Prince Murad.

**Rajput Princess.**—Emperor's third wife was the daughter of Raja Behari Lal of Amber and the sister of Raja Bhagwandas. His matrimonial alliances with the Rajputs opened a new chapter in the history of his relations with the princes of Rajputana. A proud and haughty race, Akbar was clever enough to win their active co-operation in every field. The new bride in the harem was treated with

greatest consideration. She was freely allowed to observe the practices of her own religion. Akbar, tolerant by nature, did not wish to stand in her way of her religious worship.

**Rani Jodha Bai.**—She was the princess of Jodhpur. Akbar's mother Hamida Banu was given the title of 'Maryan Makani,' the same honour was conferred upon her. Other wives of the emperor were Bibi Daulat Shad, and the daughter of Abdulla Khan Mughal. Later on Akbar married the wife of Abdulwasi, who was a charming lady well known for her beauty, and the daughter of Mirza Mubarak Shah of Khandesh. Lane Pool writes: "He took other women Hindu, Persian, Mughal, and even an Armenian, until his harem formed a parliament of religions though no rumour of their debates even reached the outside world."

**The Imperial Harem.**—Abul Fazal mentions that Akbar's lawful wives were only three. The two Rajput princesses and Sultana Raqiyat Begum were the legal ones, and about others we are lacking in evidence to prove that they were also legally wedded. Besides those that have been mentioned, there were five thousand women in Mughal harem, and each one was allotted a separate apartment. They were divided into various sections

and liberal allowances were granted to the women of high social status, varying from Rs. 1,028 to 1,610 per mensem. It must have been considered an exorbitant sum in those days when the purchasing value of money was immensely high so much so that a rupee could buy three maunds of wheat. If a woman wanted anything within the limits of her own allowance she had to apply to the Tahsildars. Inside the harem, the eunuchs and women superintendents were appointed to keep a watch. Outside the enclosures a guard of sturdy Rajputs, Ahdis and other troops were kept on all the four sides. Whenever the wives of the court nobles wished to meet the Begums in the harem, they had to seek permission from the servants.

**Akbar's Children.**—Akbar had five sons and three daughters. The first were twins Hasan and Husain, who died in their infancy. His third son Prince Salim was the son of the Rajput princess and was named after the holy saint of Ajmer. The other two, Murad and Daniyal, were born to royal concubines. His three daughters were Shahgadi Begum (born to a concubine), Shukrinnisa Begum and Aram Banu. Prince Salim was given the rank of the commander of ten thousand horses, Prince Murad, Daniyal and Sultan Khusro were made the commanders of 8, 7, 5 thousand horses, respectively. Akbar did not have the good fortune to see any happiness from his children.



His younger sons Murad and Daniyal took to excessive drinking and improper ways and both of them died in the prime of their youth and it gave a terrible shock to the emperor. The only survival Prince Salim turned to be a haughty and disobedient son who cared little for the wishes of his father.

**Akbar's Relations With Prince Salim.**—Right from the beginning till the end the relations between the father and the son were never cordial. Prince Salim was the only one who survived of the five sons of Akbar. The first two Husain and Hasan died in their infancy and the other two, Daniyal and Murad, died of excessive drinking in the prime of their youth. Prince Salim turned into a haughty, disobedient, and unfaithful son and his behaviour caused a bitter disappointment to the emperor. The gulf between the father and the son became widened more and more as Salim was impatient to become the monarch of Hindustan, and secondly the murder of his mistress Anarkali made him still more adamant in disobeying his father at every step.

**Rebellion of Prince Salim.**—In 1600 when Akbar was engaged in the campaigns of Asir Garh, he left Prince Salim in charge of Delhi, and instructed him to deal with the Afghan rebel Usman Khan in Bengal. But Salim paid no heed to his orders; he remained in

Allahabad and misappropriated the revenues of Bihar which amounted to 29 lacs of rupees. Large jagirs he granted to his supporters, caring little for the wishes of his father. Akbar felt greatly disgusted at the misbehaviour of his son and decided to return to Delhi. Prince Salim with his associates and with a big force marched towards Agra. Akbar ordered him to retreat and at the same time in order to pacify him entrusted him with the government of Bengal and Orissa. Salim went back to Allahabad, declared his independence, and issued currency on his name. He also solicited the help of Portuguese in his designs against his Father.

Akbar being greatly perplexed at the misconduct of Salim sought Abul Fazal's advice, who was in Deccan at that time and summoned him to Delhi. Unfortunately, he was murdered on his way by one Bir Singh Bundela at the instigation of Prince Salim and he admits his crime in his memoirs. He felt jealous of the trust which his father reposed in Abul Fazal and always blamed him for his misunderstandings with Akbar. He writes of Abul Fazal: "Sheikh Abul Fazal who excelled the Sheikhzadas of Hindustan in wisdom and learning had adorned himself outwardly with the jewel of sincerity and sold it to my father at a heavy price. He had been summoned from Deccan and since his feelings towards me

were not honest—he both publicly and privately spoke against me—it became necessary to prevent him from coming to court. As Bir Singh's country was exactly on the route and he was then a rebel, I sent him a message that if he would stop the sedition-monger and kill him, he would receive every kindness from me." Akbar's agony was great when he heard the sad news. His dearest friend was murdered at the instigation of his son. He exclaimed : "If Salim wanted to be the emperor, he might have killed me and spared Abul Fazal." In 1603 a short reconciliation was made between the father and the son through the intervention of Sultana Salmah Begum, the widow of Bairam Khan, whom Akbar had married. But it did not last long. Salim went back to Allahabad and declared his independence again.

The haughty and insolent behaviour of the Prince gave a chance to the nobles at the court to put forward the claims of his son Prince Khusro. The plot was supported by Man Singh and Aziz Koka to whose daughter Khusro was wedded. But it did not succeed, and Salim became the emperor after the death of his father known in history as the Emperor Jehangir.

**The Historical Romance of Salim and Anarkali.**—Nadirah (she) was known in her early days. Her father had fled to Persia

with her for his safety. On his way he was assassinated by a gang of robbers, and Nadirah remained a slave throughout her life. She was hardly ten years old when she was presented to the emperor by the Governor of Kabul. Travelling with the royal caravan she reached Lahore in 1589. For full ten years she lived in the imperial harem entertaining the royal guests with her superb music and exquisite dancing. Possessed with a lovely figure and bewitching beauty, they changed her name into Anarkali—‘pomegranate blossom.’ Out of all the royal guests it was the proud prince Salim whose love she had conquered and suffered most. Very little is known of the transitory happiness of the two. Abul Fazal, the trusted friend of the emperor, found it out. A trap was laid in the royal palace. Anarkali and Salim were invited to attend a concert. After the dancing and singing was over, Anarkali was taken prisoner. Prince Salim managed to escape with her, but the spies of Akbar soon found it out and she was again captured. Akbar ordered that Anarkali should be put to a horrible death. Her tender body was ‘sealed alive in a brickwall.’ What a fate awaited her she did not know. After the death of Akbar, when Prince Salim became the king, he started the reconstruction of her tomb at Lahore, which was finished in 1615 and her body was reinterred there by her royal paramour.

It was most cruel of Akbar to have treated Anarkali in such a manner. Henry Beveridge condemns him in the severest terms and remarks: "He committed an atrocity with excuses if it does not justify the son for making war upon him (Akbar) it might even have excused an act of parricide."

**Death of Akbar.**—The last days of the emperor were not happy. His two sons died before him in the prime of their youth. His best friend Abul Fazal was murdered. Salim continued to be impertinent and disobedient and he himself was not keeping in a good health. His constipation became weak and he suffered from stomach ache. Hakim Ali Gilani, the royal physician, was an ignorant man and failed to diagnose the disease. His weakness increased day by day but even in this state of health he continued to give audience to his people whose love he had conquered. After seventeen days of unsuccessful treatment Hakim Ali stopped attending him. Fearing the rage of the emperor and the rebuke of the harem, he placed himself under the protection of Sheikh Faudi.

Round the death bed of the great Mughal, a shameless plot was hatched to advance the claims of his grandson prince Khusro, supported by his father-in-law Khan-i-Aziz Koka, who held the charge of the entire administration

during the illness of the emperor, and Raja Man Singh a powerful noble of his time. For a time a civil war between the father and the son (Jehangir and Khusro) seemed inevitable. Asid Beg records: 'They (prince Khusro and his supporters) determined to seize the prince when he came, according to his daily custom, to pay his respect at court thus displaying the nature of their mind little considering that the sun cannot be smeared with mud, nor the marks of the pen of destiny be erased by the pen-knife of treachery. He whom the hand of the power of Allah upholds, though he be helpless in himself is safe from all evil.' The nobles at the court opposed the accession of Khusro on the principle that only the eldest son succeeds the father. The emperor too desired that Salim should be declared his lawful successor before his eyes and wished that Khusro should be entrusted with the charge of the administration of Bengal. If Akbar would have spoken a word against his son at this juncture, it was certain that Salim would never have got the throne. When Aziz Koka and Raja Man Singh saw the change in the tide, they too changed their plans and supported the cause of Salim. Prince Khusro made an escape to Bengal with the help of Raja Man Singh.

The emperor was very anxious that no misunderstanding should prevail between his

son and the veteran nobles who had served him faithfully all their lives. Accordingly Salim was invested with the turban and robes of the dying king. On the evening of Wednesday (4th Aban) 15th October, 1605, Akbar left for his heavenly home at the age of 63. The emperor was suspicious of Salim and it is said that in his unconscious state of mind he uttered words accusing him for administering poison. He is said to have spoken "Baba Sheikhji since all this Sultanate will devolve on thee, why hast thou made this attack on me. To take away my life there was no need of injustice. I would have given to thee if thou hath asked me."

Salim was quite worthy of taking such an action. His lust of power always had an upper hand over paternal love, and it is no wonder he might have poisoned his father. But we are lacking in sufficient proof to give a definite judgment on this point.

The accounts given in *Ain-i-Akbari* of the death of Akbar are indeed very sorrowful. It is probable that the book might have been completed by Abul Fazal's brother Faizi, or by any of his friends as he was murdered before Akbar. A passage from *Ain-i-Akbari* is quoted below :

"The men of this world sat down in the dark days of failure while the inhabitants of

the other world attained their long cherished wishes. The report of the disaster caused lamentation in both heaven and earth. Darkness took the possession of the earth, the evening of sorrow fell upon mortals in the midday of contentment.....Good God what personality he was, free from every stain and endowed with all perfection. 'They ne'er died nor will die who are spiritual. Death is but a name in reflection to them.'

'It was a mighty death.'

The belief which was current a few years after the death of the emperor, that he took poisonous pills by mistake, does not hold itself true. The Annals of Bunde, which was a note on important events of Akbar's reign kept by the Rajput princes, state that the emperor was greatly annoyed with Raja Man Singh and wanted to remove him by poisoning, but by mistake the emperor took himself the very pills which were prepared for him, and gave him the innocuous pills which he himself intended to take. Historian Tod considers this belief to be quite acceptable. The other one is put forward by President Van Den. He says that Akbar was displeased with Mirza Ghazi Beg, the son of Jani Beg of Sindh, "on account of an arrogant expression which had fallen from him" and ordered the physician to prepare poisonous pills which he took himself in confusion, and when he came to know



of his mistake, it was too late to counteract its effects, as the poison had spread through his whole body.

Both the above-mentioned beliefs are not worthy to be accepted, as neither Abul Fazal nor Badauni has mentioned any such event. Vincent Smith remarks that though the stories concerning the self-poisoning of the emperor may have been based on some facts, yet he says the materials do not warrant a definite judgment.

During his lifetime the emperor had started a construction near Sikandra where he wished his body should be buried. Accordingly, his remains were interred there. The people who joined the funeral procession were not many in number. The dead lion was no more to be feared or loved. The Jesuit historian observes: 'Thus does the World treat those from whom it expects no good and fears no evil.'

When Jehangir became the emperor he started the reconstruction of the tomb at an exorbitant cost with all due respect to his late father. Smith observes rightly when he says: "Jehangir professed the most profound reverence for the memory of his father once he was safely dead and buried."

## GENERAL FEATURES OF MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION

While dealing with the administrative system of Akbar we are confronted with a great deal of difficulty, lacking in information about the details of general affairs of Government. Most of the records have perished and those which are in existence are the original Persian records, which have not been studied till the present day. Although Abul Fazal, the author of *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Akbar Nama*, supplies us a great deal of information, yet he does not give us a sincere and true picture of the actual working of the Government. Instead of giving us the description of the existing state of affairs, he gives us an ideal picture as what they should be.

Mr. W. Crooke says: "No one who reads *Ain-i-Akbari*, the cyclopaedic annals of his rule, fails to be conscious of certain lack of departmental prospective. Akbar was master of details, but detail is pushed to extreme—we learn little of essentials of the administration."

J.E.Redd observes: "What trusts are to be placed in the figures of *Ain-i-Akbari*—it may be questioned whether it was an ideal

assessment and whether it was ever collected for the State."

The broad features of administration were that it was a centralised despotism. The king was an autocratic ruler. It may be a benevolent despotism as was Akbar's, but the will of the sovereign was everything, and people were nothing. Theoretically he was all in all, holding the highest judicial, military, executive and legislative power. He could put any man to death without assigning any particular reason whatsoever, or could raise any humble man to the highest position in the State. He could annul any law passed by his predecessors. Unlike the constitutional monarchy in England, the Mughal sovereign was the seat of all power. In practice he was assisted by a small body of experienced men such as the Chancellor, the Bakshi, the Khan-i-Zaman, the chief Sardar, etc. Free institutions like legislative assemblies were unknown to the people. If the sovereign was strong and efficient, the administration was good.

In fact the personal qualities of the king were predominant everywhere. Although Akbar gave to people of Hindustan that solidarity and unity which no Mughal ruler ever gave, yet, on the whole, people were unconscious of their political and civil rights. We cannot overlook the fact that in England

people had begun to be conscious of their political rights long ago, providing a check on the despotic rule of the king. They had their own assemblies with their representatives of the people. It would be fair to admit without any prejudice that English people were far more politically advanced than the people in India in those times.

As far as the year 1213 King John under the force of financial and political emergency summoned by a writ a parliament which granted him money. They had already got their first bill of rights, the Magna Charta. Later on in 1264 there was the Simon-de-mon-forts' parliament and the Model Parliament of 1295 where the three classes of baronage, clergy and commons were represented. The contemporaries of Akbar, Henry the VIII and Elizabeth were despotic to a certain extent but were conscious of the check that the people provided. Henry VIII wrote to the Pope: "The discussions in the English Parliament are free and unrestrictive; the Crown has no power to limit the debate or to control the votes of the debate." The fact is that Reformation and Ranaissance, the two movements, gave to the people an independent outlook on life, while its growth was restricted and handicapped by the economic and political factors in India. The only possible check that could be exercised by the people on the autocratic power of the

king was to rise into a successful rebellion. But if the ruler was strong and efficient even that was impossible.

The bulk of the population was ignorant and submissive to the will of the sovereign. Imparting education was not considered a duty of the State, but a philanthropic work of the king. The Mughal administrative system was military in origin as every officer of the imperial administration held a number of mansabs in the army. The promotion of the official depended in holding an increased command of mansabs. Every officer was paid by the military paymaster.

The emperor was the fountain of justice, the highest court for civil and criminal appeals. He was the Khalifa of age, head of the church and the State alike. The civil and criminal cases were tried in open court according to the Quranic or Hindu law as the case may be.

The Mughal administration has been described as a mixture of foreign and Indian elements. Sir Jadu Nath Sircar<sup>1</sup> writes : "The Mughal administration presented a combination of Indian and extra-Indian elements; or more correctly it was the Perso-Arabic system in Indian setting. The principles of the government, their church policies, their rules and

---

1 Mughal Administration by Sircar.

taxation, their departmental arrangement, and their very titles of the officials were imported ready-made from outside India. But a compromise was effected with the older native system already in possession of the field and familiar to the people governed. The details of the imported system were modified for the local needs. The existing Indian practice and the customary law were respected as far as it did not run counter to the root principles of all Islamic governments; and generally speaking in village administration and the lower rungs of the official ladder the Indian usage was allowed to prevail, while the foreign model swayed almost exclusively the court and the higher official circles."

The escheat system made the rise of a permanent aristocracy the strongest safeguard of public liberty impossible. The system implied that the State confiscated all the possessions of nobles and chiefs after their death, and gave to children whatever it pleased. The king was the sole heir of property and the children of the deceased had to start a new life again. Had this system not been prevalent the rise of a permanent aristocracy would have provided a great check on the despotism of the king. Sircar says: "Thus generation after generation an Islamic country witnessed the same process of building up fortunes from the smallest beginning and undoing a life's work at death

by the confiscation of the private property of the deceased man to the State and reduction of his son in the rank of poor commoners." The nobles during their lifetime led a life of ease and luxury which prevented the accumulation of capital, an essential factor for the economic growth of the country. The officers remained in debt to the government throughout their lives.

The empire was divided into different provinces each having a governor appointed by the emperor. He was responsible for the smooth working of administration, for the collection of revenue, and for executing the firmans of the central government.

Big industries and the capitalistic system of production were unknown. The State was its own producer and own consumer. If the things required were not available in the market the State undertook the manufacturing for its own consumption. Means of transport and communication were far and scarce, and to interchange commodities from one place to another was not an easy job.

Agra, Lahore, Delhi, Fatehpur Sikri were the principal towns of trade and commerce. There dwelt the nobility to patronise the ancient arts and crafts. The emperor himself expanded the system of palace workshops. Abul Fazal writes that in the imperial house-

hold there were more than hundred offices and workshops each resembling a city or a kingdom.

The arts and crafts, the painting, the sculpture and architecture received great impetus at the hands of Akbar. Music was greatly patronised. Akbar's policy of tolerance made it possible for art and literature to flourish. The genius of the Hindus and Muslims arose to the highest level. In fact Akbar's reign represents the golden age of the Hindu-Muslim culture in India.



## CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

**The King.**—Akbar was an autocratic ruler, but his was a benevolent despotism based on liberal and humanitarian principles. He was the seat of all powers and the fountain of all justice. Theoretically or practically the highest powers of the administration were concentrated in him. There was no constitutional machinery above his head to control his actions. Sircar says : “The Muslim State was essentially a military state and depended for its existence on the absolute authority of the monarch who was also its supreme general.”

The king was assisted by a Vakil the highest authority after the emperor, and a small body of men such as the High Steward; the Chief Kazi, the Bakshi, the Sadar and others. Their status was definitely inferior to that of the Vakil, who supervised their work. They held the office as long as they enjoyed the confidence of the emperor, and they had no authority to tie him down with their decisions. Not even the Vakil could do it. The king with his counsellors made the laws and executed them. The will of the emperor was everything. He could accept or reject their advice. Dr. Smith says: “He was often the teacher

rather than the pupil of his ministers.”<sup>1</sup> Parsad says: “His bureaucracy, half-civil and half-military admirably served his purpose and administrative efficiency reached its high watermark for the first time under Muhammadan rule. The emperor himself was the guiding spirit of all reforms and policies and it was his master mind which grasped the minutest details of government and made possible the smooth working of the whole machinery.”

Akbar's idea of kingship differed from that of the latter Mughals. His theories of administration were based on most liberal principles. During his reign no distinction was made on religious grounds. ‘Career open to talent’ was the key-note of his policy. Feeling as one of them and no stranger to the ideas, aspirations, customs, and traditions of the people of the soil, he ruled with an even hand all his subject alike. Some of the ablest administrators were Hindus, people like Raja Todar Mal, Bhagwandas, Man Singh, Bir Bal rose to the highest position in the empire.

**The Central Government.**—The whole empire was divided into Subahs, each under a local governor appointed by the emperor and responsible to none else but to the the king. Important matters like finance and military pay and accounts etc. were dealt with

---

1 A Short History of Muslim Rule in India by Ishwari Parsad.

by the central authority under the immediate authority of the emperor and his counsellors. The firmans issued by them were binding on the provincial government. A contact was maintained with the provinces through officers appointed by the central authority called Waqai-Nawis who communicated the important news of the provinces.

The main departments of the Mughal government were nine in number.

1. Exchequer and Revenue under the High Diwan.
  2. The Imperial Household under the Khan-i-Saman.
  3. The Military pay and accounts office under the Imperial Bakshi.
  4. Canon law, both civil and criminal, under the Chief Kazi.
  5. Religious endowments and charity under the Chief Sadar.
  6. Censorship of public morals under the Muhtasib.
  7. The Artillery under Mir Atish.
  8. Intelligence and Posts under the Darogha of Dak-i-Chowki.
  9. Imperial Mint under a Darogha.
- Besides these the other important officers were :

the Mustaufi (the Auditor General), the Chief Superintendent of Forests, Mir Arazi the

petitioner of appeals, the Finance Secretary, Waqia Nawis, the News Reporters, the Chief Admiral and 3 Superintendents of the Royal Kitchen, of the Royal Stud, and of the Imperial workshops.

**The Counsellor or the Vakil.**—In Akbar's reign the prime minister was known as Vakil, who was the chief executive officer in the Empire, while the Wazir was the chief finance minister. He was the representative of the king in all social functions. The Emperor consulted the Vakil in all matters of war and peace, and in the settlement of revenue collection, and in appointment of provincial governors. Many a time, the two formed decisions on important issues of the government without the knowledge of other ministers. His status carried dignity and honour, and was the highest position to which a man could aspire to in the Imperial Government. In the beginning, the Wazir was made in charge of the Revenue department but as the time passed, the general control and supervision passed into the hands of the Vakil. He was the connecting link between other officials and the State. All the official records were inspected by him, and whenever the payment of large sums was needed, the approval and sanction of the Vakil was necessary.

He submitted to the emperor the daily abstracts of despatches sent and received by

him. He controlled and guided the provincial governors in the matter of assessment and collection of revenue. His signatures were essential on all the State documents, on copies of the emperor's writing, on verbal reports, on Royal firmans, which were issued from time to time. He interviewed the agents of the provinces, of the provincial governors, and of other nobles of the court.

If the king was strong and efficient, naturally the authority and influence of the Vakil was limited. In the early reign of Akbar his Regent Bairam Khan occupied this position. Like every other official of government he was supposed to hold mansabs in the army. Sometimes he was engaged in military occupation, but his duty of general supervision and regular attendance of the emperor stood in his way of going to distant places.

As a Dewan he was the head of revenue department responsible for laying down the general policy of assessment. The provincial governors sent in important despatches on State issue and sought his approval and guidance. He was in charge of diplomatic relations of the emperor with European Powers. He drafted letters on behalf of the king and sent them to foreign rulers. Usually his office was occupied by men of great experience, character and integrity in the empire.

**The Bakshi Paymaster.**—The civil officers of the Mughal government were also military officers, Mansabdars commanding a number of horses according to their rank and dignity in the empire. The salary of an officer was determined according to the number of mansabs he held.

The Bakshi paymaster was entrusted with the general supervision of the whole army. He looked after the recruitment of soldiers, and calculated and passed the salary bills of all the officers. He watched that the Mansabdars kept their horses in a fit condition. As the empire increased in size it was found difficult to cope with the heavy work, so the Bakshi paymaster had under him four assistants, respectively, called the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Bakshi.

The artillery branch was managed by Mir Atish who was also under the direct management of the Chief Bakshi.

**Khan-i-Saman or the High Steward.**—Khan-i-Saman was one of the most important officers in the Mughal administration. He was entrusted with the general supervision in the emperor's personal staff and accompanied him on his journeys and military expeditions. Generally, persons commanding great confidence were appointed to this post to look after the emperor's household establishment, to

supervise his food, and stores, and his daily purchases. Maurice says of him as "the head in-charge of whole expenditure of the Royal household in reference to both great and small things." The Wazirs were often appointed from one of the Khan-i-Samans, as they usually enjoyed great trust of the emperor. He was to keep the record of yearly expenditure and output of the different *karkhanas* and stores. He appointed, posted, and dismissed the Daroghas, the Amirs, and the Mushrifs, of the various workshops. He dealt with all the correspondence in connection with the different stores, and looked after the property and gardens belonging to the State.

It was his duty to buy presents and new robes for the emperor and royal princes for presenting them on the festival occasions. He also made arrangements for the marriages of the princes.

**The Censor of Public Morals.**—One of the essential duties of the State is to make the life and property of the individual safe ; but in olden days, the State also considered itself as the guardian of the morals of the people and made them to regulate their lives according to their religion in the best possible manner. It is only the trend of modern thought and liberalism that the State interference is discouraged totally in matters con-

cerning the religious and private life of the individual.

The office of the censor of public morals is an ancient one. Even it existed in the times of the Khiljis and the Tughlaks. The duty of the censor was to regulate the lives of the the people according to the principles of the Quranic Law, and to stop the evil practices condemned in Shariyat such as gambling and the use of intoxicating drinks. Instructions were issued to them in the following way: "In the cities do not permit the sale of intoxicating drinks nor the residence of professional women as it is opposed to the sacred law." The censor could punish the persons having heretical opinions, and those accused of blasphemy against the Prophet. They were supposed to treat the people with great kindness and sympathy first but if they did not listen, the censor had the option to report to the governor of the province. In short, the censor's duty was to encourage the people to live a clean, healthy, and vigorous life.

**The Chief Sadar.**—He was the chief civil judge, and the supervisor of endowments of land granted by the emperor or by the princes to the various religious institutions, to the pious men such as monks, who had renounced all worldly pleasures and to the scholars who were unable to support themselves.



He was the Almoner (distributor of alms) of the emperor, and distributed the money given by him as charity in the month of Ramzan, or on his birthday, or on the marriages of royal princes, or on other holy occasions. The sum amounted to one and half lakh of rupees in the reign of Aurangzeb. The Sadars of Akbar's reign were men of notorious character, noted for their corruption and dishonesty. The chief Sadar appointed the provincial Sadars and gave them instructions with regard to their work. For these posts men of high literary qualifications in the Arabic language were appointed.

**The Chief Kazi.**—The emperor was the highest court of appeal in civil as well as in criminal matters. But only the selected cases came to him, and the rest were disposed of by the chief Kazi, who was the highest judicial authority and who tried them according to Muslim law assisted by a Mufti and a Mir Adil. His position carried great respect and dignity in the empire. The State instructed the Kazis not to accept presents from the people. The emperor took great care to prevent corruption and to maintain the rule of justice, but in spite of his best efforts and vigilant care most of the Kazis were men of unscrupulous character noted for taking bribes. The chief Kazi appointed the local Kazis in the cities and villages.

**Buyutat.**—It was a title given to the officer who registered the wealth and property of the deceased. He decided the amount to be confiscated by the State, and the calculation was made according to the debt which he owed to the State. The surplus amount was given to the deceased's heirs. In addition to this he was to fix the prices of the articles, make provisions for the royal *karkhanas*, and estimate their output and expenses.

## PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Under Sher Shah Suri the empire was divided into 47 divisions, and further subdivided into parganas, and sarkars. Each pargana had a Shiqdar, a Treasurer, a Patwari, a Chowdhri, a Muqaddam and a Hindi and a Persian writer. Humayun had no definite plan of administration. He divided the country among his generals introducing the Fief system. But under Akbar, Jagir system was abolished. He converted all the Jagirs into crown lands and started paying salaries to the officers. He thought it would be more efficient and convenient to divide the country into 15 subahs namely:—

- |               |              |            |
|---------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. Agra       | 6. Bihar     | 11. Kabul  |
| 2. Allahabad  | 7. Bengal    | 12. Lahore |
| 3. Ahmedabad  | 8. Berar     | 13. Multan |
| 4. Ahmednagar | 9. Delhi     | 14. Malwa  |
| 5. Ajmer      | 10. Khandesh | 15. Oudh   |

**Subahdar.**—He was called the Nazim, the Governor, or the Subahdar of the Province. Each Subah was placed under his charge. He was appointed by the emperor, and was the head of the administration. He exercised the highest civil, military and judicial powers in the province. His duty was to maintain law and order, to look after the successful working

of all the branches of administration, in the collection of revenue and in maintaining the provincial army. He was also to decide important judicial cases of a complicated nature. He kept a large number of spies to supply him with all the necessary information regarding the nobles, the ryots, and the judicial officers. He was instructed by the central authority : To keep a good behaviour with all classes of the people, and to put down tyranny and maintain the rule of justice. 2. He was to punish the rebel zamindars and other corrupted people and report such matters to the central authority. 3. He was to give recommendations about the mansabdars to the emperor, of those who were trustworthy and efficient in their work. 4. He was to maintain a balance between the income and expenditure of the State. 5. He was to collect the tributes which were due from the vassals of the emperor near to his place of jurisdiction, and send the required sum to the court. 6. He was to look after the welfare of ryots and to encourage them to extend the field of their cultivation as it was the only permanent source of income to the State.

In his work he was assisted by a (i) Diwan, (ii) Sadar, (iii) Amil, (iv) Bitikchi, (v) Potdar, (vi) Foujdar, (vii) Kotwal, (viii) Waqia Nawis, (ix) Qanungo and Patwaris.

**Limitation of the Powers of the Subahdar.**—He was to execute all the royal commands issued by the emperor, and remain in office during his pleasure. The emperor was the sole authority in the dismissal of provincial governors. A subahdar was the commander-in-chief of the provincial forces, but could not declare war or make peace without the immediate permission of the emperor.

2. He could not appoint or dismiss the officers of the Central government, namely the Diwan and the Sadar.

3. He was not to interfere in the religious matters of the people.

4. Without the immediate orders of the emperor, he could not inflict capital punishment.

The Subahdar lived in the provincial capital. The government remained in touch with the villages by means of foudars, and the petty officials of the Revenue Department. Sometimes the Subahdar went round the villages and enquired about the difficulties of the people. The Zamindar also paid frequent visits to the provincial court and so a contact was maintained.

**The Provincial Diwan.**—He was the second official in the province in rank and

dignity and a rival of Subahdar. Often the relations between the two were not very cordial.

The provincial Diwan was directly appointed by the Wazir, and the Subahdar had no authority to dismiss him. Whenever there was a difference of opinion, the advice of the Central government was solicited. The Diwan provided a great check on the power of the Subahdar, and kept a secret watch over his movements and his relations with the Zamin-dars of the province.

**His Duties.**—1. He was to keep a watch over the royal treasury and see that nobody draws money without a warrant, and when the dues were paid into the treasury, the receipts were issued to their agents. All the bills of payment were to be signed by him. 2. He was instructed to appoint collectors and to see that the ryots paid taxes and increased the extent of their cultivation. 3. If there were any arrears left, which were due to the State, the Diwan had to collect the amount by instalments at the rate of 5% every season. 4. He was to send a copy of his despatches to the Imperial record office.

**Duties of the Foujdar.**—He helped the Nazim in the maintenance of law and order in the province, and co-operated with him in every possible manner in discharging his executive

duties. He was the Commander of the provincial forces. 2. When the Amil failed to realise the taxes which were due to the State, he was to help him with military force if required. 3. He was to watch that the Zamindars paid the revenue to the State regularly. 4. He was to keep the military equipments in a fit condition so that in case there is a rebellion in the province it should be put down promptly.

The functions of the Foujdars are described in *Ain-i-Akbari*-(ii 40-41). The Foujdars were entrusted with different subdivision of the province (they were supposed to be men of tact, shrewdness and honesty). They were given instructions to deal with qanungos, zamindars and soldiers with a great tact.

**Kotwal.**—Abul Fazal gives a long list of the duties of a Kotwal in his book *Ain*. It is observed from his writings that he gives an ideal instead of a real picture of Kotwal, his work and his duties. He was one of the most important officers in the locality. (1) When the emperor or the Nazim held court of justice and granted audience, the presence of the Kotwal was necessary. (2) He was in charge of the prisons, and was to record the number of persons who were imprisoned and the charges levied against them. It was his duty to report to the highest official of those persons whom he considered guilty or innocent,

or of those who deserved capital punishment. He was also to keep a guard over the prisoners so that they may not escape. (3) He was to maintain law and order in the locality and take daily reports from the watchmen and officers of the important news in a mohalla. He was to arrest thieves, robbers and keep watchmen on the public streets in the cities in order to keep an eye on the pickpockets. (4) He was supposed to summon the dancing girls and sellers of intoxicants and warn them that if they would trespass the law, they would be liable to pay the fine. He was to inspect the weights and measures so that customers may not be cheated. (5) He was instructed to possess a knowledge of the private affairs of men, as to what was their income and what was their expenditure. Manucci observes : "It is his business to stop the distillation of spirits. He has to see that there were no public women in the town nor anything else forbidden. He obtains information about all that goes on so as to be able to send in his report (to the ruler). For this purpose there are throughout the Mughal empire certain persons known as (house scavengers). These men are under obligation to go twice a day to clean out every house and they tell a **Kotwal** all that goes on. He is subordinate to the Kazi and receives orders from him. Under his orders there is a considerable number of body of cavalry and a



great number of foot soldiers. In every ward there is a horseman and 20 to 30 foot soldiers who in a sort of way, go the rounds."

He was instructed to keep census of the houses, and inhabitants, in his jurisdiction.

Abul Fazal says : "The appropriate person for this office should be vigorous, experienced, active, deliberate, patient, astute and human."

**News Reporters.**—The means of transport and communication were not developed in the Mughal times, but it was essential that the central authority should keep contact with all the provincial news. For this purpose news reporters were appointed.

**Waqai Nawis.**—He was posted in each of the provinces and in big cities, and also attached to the field army. Originally they were the only reporters employed, but there was always a fear that they might join in conspiracy with the local officers, and may not report to the authorities the correct news. In order to overcome this collusion Sawanih Nigar, *i.e.* secret reporters, were appointed at special places only.

**Sawanih Nigar.**—The secret intelligence officers acted as spies, and were appointed at particular places only. They sent news twice a week on the whole Subah to the central authorities, without informing the local officials.

They had also kept their agents to supply them with the news of different places where they could not go themselves.

**Harkaras** were posted in the province and they sent to the Nazim the news of every locality, despatched in sealed envelopes to the Imperial government. They kept their agents in the Nazim's office.

**Means of Sending Letters.**—There was a Superintendent of Posts and Intelligence, or Darogha of Dak Chauki, who received all the news and letters, and submitted to the Wazir without checking them. Darogha was the Chief boss of the reporters, their protector, and many a times he advocated their rights and got the governor punished if he used his influence in suppressing the truth.

Agents were appointed by Waqai Nawis in different parganas, in the offices of the Nazim, of the Diwan, and of the Foujdar, to supply him with all the information necessary to be communicated. They had to submit a copy of the news to the Subahdar, or to the Commander of field army, before sending it to the central authorities. They had to send the news four times in a month, and were given strict instructions not to offend the nobles unnecessarily, but to report the facts in every matter; otherwise they were liable to be punished if the higher authorities came to know

them from any other source. When provincial courts were held their presence was essential to record the proceedings. The Imperial court had appointed separate reporters of its own to communicate them directly the important news of a pargana.

## LAND REVENUE SYSTEM

**The Agriculturists.**—A distinguished feature amongst the life of the agriculturists in India has been that there has always existed a constant antagonism between the State and the ryots. The agriculturists have always been reluctant to pay the State demand, because of the fact that a cultivator enjoyed practically no privileges from the Government, except a sense of security from foreign aggression. We cannot overlook the fact that the tillers of the soil have had the worst time in every generation. Their poverty, their ignorance and illiteracy, their ignoble customs and traditions, and the powerful clutch of the money lenders, one and all have stood as great handicaps towards the betterment of the cultivators.

In the days of Mughals, and even before that, the village was a self-sufficient unit, and managed the various activities of society from their own contributions under the guidance of the ancient indigenous institutions of the Panchayats, where local disputes between the zamindars and other important issues of the villagers were decided. So the fact remained that the cultivators received no benefits from the Government, and were unwilling to

contribute their share towards the imperial revenue.

The political condition of the medieval India had been such that the ignorant peasants could not recognize and understand as to whom they should owe their allegiance. They had seen with their own eyes, falling dynasty after dynasty, and each power being crushed by a superior one. The wars of succession, and the political intrigues caused suspicion in their minds to whom to pay the revenue, even when they had the inclination to pay. Commenting on this, Sir Jadunath Sircar<sup>1</sup> writes : "Many centuries of political insecurity and revolution have left in the mind of Indian peasant, even in 20th century, sub-conscious but ingrained belief that the wars of succession are quite in the nature of things and that even when the Government is engaged in a war, anywhere, a wise peasant ought to think twice before paying the revenue due." Moreover, the revenue officials collected abwabs or unauthorized exactions from the cultivators in addition to the State demand. Though they were forbidden by the Emperor, yet, they were levied by the local governors, under their jurisdiction at their own discretion.

**Early Revenue Measures of Akbar.**—In the early years of Akbar's reign some revenue

---

1 Mughal Administration by Sircar.

reforms were introduced, but no concrete scheme of revenue collection was put forward. Akbar acquired new territories through conquest and the empire was enlarged. It became extremely difficult to ascertain the current prices every year and great inconvenience was caused by delay. On one side the peasant complained of excessive exactions and on the other the landlords were aggrieved on account of the revenue balances.

In 1565, Muzaffar Khan Turbati was appointed to deal with the revenue measures but we do not know exactly the nature of those reforms. After a lapse of 3 years, Shihabu-ud-Din was appointed as Finance Minister. He was a great expert and he introduced new measures to stop embezzlement.

**Todar Mal and Revenue Settlement of Gujarat.**—Todar Mal was a Rajput Khatri who had earned for himself a great reputation in the management of lands and revenues under the Afghan ruler Sher Shah.

When Muzaffar Khan was the Chancellor, he helped him in reorganizing the newly acquired kingdoms. He took an active part in suppressing the rebellion of Ali Kuli Khan. In 1574, he took the command of the conquest of Bengal. But in Indian History he is not reputed as a military general, but a unique revenue administrator of Akbar's reign.

In 1573 when Gujrat was conquered, Todar Mal was sent to reorganize the entire system of revenue administration which was in a great disorder. It was here, that Todar Mal made a first systematic study of measurements of land for the assessment of revenue. Out of the 184 parganas, 64 were systematically measured, and it took 2 years to complete the whole work. It was estimated that nearly  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the area measured was fit for cultivation, and assessment was made according to its quality. The State demand was comparatively lighter than before, but the exact rate cannot be ascertained with accuracy.

**Todar Mal's Bandobast.**—In 1575, a fresh survey was made ; and the whole empire was divided into 182 fiscal units excluding the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Gujarat, and each unit was placed under a Krori or Collector of revenue yielding a crore of tankas (Rs. 250,000). But this system was soon abandoned, and a fresh attempt was made in 1582, when Todar Mal became the chief Finance Minister. He is generally reputed in the History of India for his set of revenue reforms known as Todar Mal's Bandobast which is the "Doomsday Book" of the Mughal administration. Lane Pool<sup>1</sup> writes : "There is no name in medieval History more renowned in India to the present day than that of Todar Mal and the reason is

---

<sup>1</sup> Muslim Rule by Lane Pool.

that nothing in Akbar's reforms touched the welfare of the people than the great financial reconstruction of the revenue system."

The whole empire was divided into 12 subahs each under the charge of a Nazim. The subahs were further divided into Sarkars and subdivided into parganas for example. The province of Agra included nearly 13 Sarkars and 203 parganas.

A fixed standard of mensuration having been adopted, the land was surveyed. It was then classified accordingly as waste, fallow or under crop. The last class was taken as the basis of assessment that which produced cereals, or oil seeds being assessed to pay one-third of the average gross produce to the State, the others two-thirds being left to the cultivators. This was a complete departure from the Law of Islam, for it made no difference between the revenue raised from the Muslims and that raised from unbelievers. Sher Shah's demand was in no case exceeded. It is very noticeable that Akbar added to his policy of union the equally important policy of continuity of system. He aimed at securing to the peasant the power of enjoying his property and profiting by the fruits of his labour. The needy husbandman was furnished with advances repayable on easy terms. The assessments, when once made, were assessed for nineteen years and after the



24th year of the reign the aggregate collection of the past ten years having been added together and divided by ten the future collections were made on the basis of this decimal average" (Lane Pool).

In Akbar's time land revenue formed the principal source of income to the State. He had already abolished Jaziya, pilgrim tax, and 50 other minor duties, which gave considerable revenue to the Government.

In settling the revenue reforms, his one aim was to levy a tax on the land necessary for the successful working of the administration without putting undue burden on the cultivators. It is being described as a recognition of the fact that the cultivator was acknowledged as the master of the soil, and that the State was only entitled to surplus produce of the agriculturist. Sher Shah was the first to realize that it would be beneficial to leave a definite margin between the demand of a State and the expenses of the agriculturists.

Land was divided into four categories :—

1. Polaj
2. Paruti
3. Chachar
4. Banjar

**Polaj.**—This was the most fertile kind of land which was cultivated annually. It yielded

yearly revenue and was never left fallow. Polaj was further divided into 3 grades. The first grade of land produced 20 mds. per bigha, second grade 15 mds. per bigha, and the third grade produced 10 to 24 seers per bigha. One-third of the average produce was fixed as the State demand which came to near about 5 mds. per bigha.

**Paruti.**—Land was cultivated yearly but was occasionally left fallow to regain its strength.

**Chachar.**—It remained uncultivated for 3 years.

**Banjar.**—It remained uncultivated for 5 years.

The settlement was made for 10 years. Abul Fazal writes in Ain: "His Majesty devised a remedy for these evils and in the discernment of his world adorning mind fixed a settlement for ten years: the people were thus made contented and their gratitude was abundantly manifested. From the beginning of the 15th year of the Divine Era to the 24th year an aggregate of collections was formed and a-tenth of the total revenue was fixed as the annual assessment; but from the 20th to 24th year the collections were actually determined and the five former ones were accepted.

Akbar was very careful to watch, that the collectors did not exact undue payments from

the peasants. He dismissed half of the petty officials engaged in the collection of revenue as the amount of work was considerably less than before. The agriculturists were made jointly responsible. The chief features of the revenue settlement were as follows :—

1. The State was to advance easy-term loans to the cultivators payable at the first instalment of the year's income. It also started relief measures wherever necessary, and remissions were granted in bad seasons.

2. Revenue collectors were instructed to write officially annual reports about the work, character, and integrity of their subordinates and were to see that for every payment made by the cultivators a receipt was given.

3. A record was kept in detail of all the holdings and liabilities of each cultivator.

4. The collector was instructed to transmit monthly returns to the royal treasury.

5. Voluntary payment was encouraged, but if the State demand was not realised, then only the standing crop could be attacked.

6. All the parganas, whether cultivated or uncultivated, were to be measured, and every part of the land which yielded near about

one crore of Tankas was to be entrusted under the charge of a Krori.

7. Todar Mal established the rule that accounts should be kept in Persian instead of Hindi, with the result that it became necessary for non-Muslims to learn the court language, if they desired to enter the Imperial service. Hitherto, Hindi was the main language of Hindus but with the introduction of Persian, the Hindus started earnestly in learning the language of their rulers and became gradually the Persian masters of Muslims. Consequently the growth of Urdu, a new dialect consisting of the simple and adjustable words of Persian and Hindi, was made possible.

### **Table of Land Revenue of the Mughals.**

	Year.	Sum.
Akbar.....	1594 .....	£ 18,650,000
	1605 .....	„ 19,430,000
Jehangir...	1628 .....	„ 19,680,000
Shah Jahan	1648 .....	„ 24,750,000
	1655 .....	„ 30,000,000
Aurangzeb	1667 .....	„ 30,850,000
	1697 .....	„ 43,500,000

8. The cultivators were given the option either to pay in cash or in kind, whichever was convenient to them, except in case of a few commodities such as sugar, cane and poppy.

9. The boundaries of the measured land were to be marked accurately.

10. The units of measurement were reformed; the Gaz, the Tanab, and Bigha were set and defined.

11. The port duties, the capitation tax, and in addition to this 50 other minor duties were remitted. Abwabs or unauthorized exactions were made illegal.

**Views of Lane Pool on Revenue Assessment.**—On the whole Lane Pool praises the efficient system of land revenue. But he goes on to say that in spite of the best efforts of the emperor, there had been many imperfections, which he was not able to remove. He holds that judging by a critical standard even the best and most efficient system of the world can be abused and criticized. Thus it is no exception. Inheriting the pride and prejudice of his race, he says: "Specially in an oriental country where to cheat the Government is a virtue and to grind the faces of the poor a venial fault."

**Oldham's Proposition.**—Oldham calls this a Ryotwari System, that is, the actual tillers of the soil were the persons responsible for the annual payment of the State demand. He thinks that many of the malpractices were avoided, because there existed a direct contact between the cultivator and the State. The

peasant. if he wished, could pay his rent into the royal treasury himself.

**Views of Badauni.**—Badauni by nature a bigoted Muslim ridicules every reform of Akbar whether good or bad, without realizing its effect on the people. He is critical of the revenue settlement and writes that rules were merely laid down on paper but were not actually put down into practice and most of the land remained uncultivated through the rapacity of the revenue collectors. There prevailed a confusion all round. He says the peasant suffered greatly, his family, wife and children were sold. It can't be ascertained how far Badauni has written the truth as no other historian has mentioned this fact. He has been described as an "uncompromising critic of Akbar's innovations."

The picture painted by Abul Fazal in his *Ain* may not be as true as he has represented it, but it throws a great light on the subject of revenue assessment. He justifies the rate of assessment, because he says all other taxes were repealed and in order to run successfully the machinery of the state the rate could not have been lessened than  $1/3$ .

**Vincent Smith's Criticism.**—Smith is of opinion that the system was an admirable one, but he holds the view that a person who has been in close touch with the revenue

administration, as he has been a member of the Indian Civil Service in the United Provinces, cannot fail to find out the defects of the schemes. Like Badauni, he thinks rules which were laid down were not actually put into operation. Accounts are given, he says, that the Emperor repeated miscellaneous cesses and imports, but the Nazims of different provinces, virtually independent, acted according to their own judgment.

Dr. Smith thinks that the revenue assessment was also very severe, as judged from the accounts of Abul Fazal. According to him the best crop was taken into account and in each year the most abundant harvest accepted. This implies that rate was fixed on the maximum yield of the best crop of the season, without taking into consideration the effects of draught or famine, etc.

Abul Fazal writes that in Muslim countries of Iran, and Turan, only  $1/6$  of the produce was taken. So Smith says that judging from this standard,  $1/3$  was double the rate of the Persian standard of assessment, and that it was too harsh to accept from the cultivators such a high rate of rent. Remissions were not easily obtainable, and the whole system, he views, was devised to prevent the Government from being defrauded rather than to improve the condition of the peasants. He

may be right in holding the view that the rate of assessment was severe, but to state that protection of the interests of the Government was the primary consideration in settling the revenue reforms, would be wholly erroneous.

**Views of Dr. Ishwari Parsad.**—Dr. Parsad is the only historian who gives a fair picture of Akbar's land revenue system than any other Anglo-Indian historian has given. According to him, the whole system worked well and the State took sufficient interest and care in the cultivators. The peasant was looked upon with sympathy and to improve his condition was one of the primary consideration of the Government.

Dr. Parsad refutes Dr. Smith's statement that Todar Mal's Bandobast was introduced mainly to prevent the State from being defrauded, and that the welfare of the cultivators was only a secondary consideration. He<sup>1</sup> says: "The necessities of life were cheap and the Indian peasant lived under much better condition, he enjoyed greater happiness than is possible to him under a low assessment and a well-organised administration. The productivity of the soil was much greater than it is now. Social needs were simple and

---

1 A Short History of Muslim Rule by Dr. Parsad.



there was no false dignity. 'There was no dearth of grazing fields and milk and ghee were obtainable cheaply and in plenty.'

Dr. Parsad strongly affirms that Akbar's land revenue settlement proved greatly beneficial to the peasantry. The State demand was fixed and the peasant knew what he had to pay. As far as was possible within the skill of human machinery, sufficient safeguards were provided to overcome fraud, corruption and bribery on the part of revenue officers. Even Badauni, the most critical historian of Akbar's reign, writes that corruption was dealt with great severity.

Dr. Parsad contradicts Dr. Smith's statement "that there is a feeling of considerable scepticism concerning the conformity of practices with precept." Because he says that Smith has failed to mention any specific instances to prove that the revenue administration worked to the detriment of the cultivators. As an impartial person one would be rather inclined to support the views of Dr. Parsad than to tally with Smith's statements who has been mostly partial in undertaking the study of Akbar.

**View of Sir Jadunath Sircar.**—Sircar does not review the land revenue settlement of Akbar only, but of the entire Mughals. But in fact, the revenue settlement was the same of

later Mughals also. When we talk of the administration of Akbar we mean the entire Mughal administration till the period of Aurangzeb.

According to Sircar, the petty officials of the Mughal regime were greatly corrupt and most of the rules and regulations concerning the collectors of revenue were not observed in practice. They were in fact merely paper ordinances. (Kagzi Raj کاغذی راج). No doubt, high officials at the top, people like Saadulah Khan and Todar Mal, were men of great integrity and character, but the men at the spot were usually harsh and greedy. Moreover, he adds that the officials exacted perquisites because of the evil custom prevalent in those days of offering presents to the high officials. The officials had to be compensated by some ways for their low salaries. So they exacted abwabs, or unauthorised taxes, from the people which were held illegal by the Emperor, but were levied from time to time by the local governors at their own discretion. He writes<sup>1</sup> : "This pressure (of giving presents) passed from top to bottom though it was unintentional and the real effects were not fully realised by the head of the State. The Emperor without meaning it squeezed the Subahdars and the Subahdars did so with the zamindars; the provincial Diwan had to gratify

---

<sup>1</sup> Mughal Administration by Sircar.

the High Diwan and therefore he had to squeeze the subordinate collectors of the revenue and these men at the bottom of the official ladder squeezed the ryots.

“Taking bribes was recognised as a wicked and disgraceful thing even in Mughal times, though it was extremely practised under the veil of secrecy. The low salaries paid by the Government had necessarily to be supplemented by the clerks and other subordinates exacting unauthorised fees from the men who had to do business with them.”

**The Krori or the Collector.**—The Krori was the collector of the revenue who was entrusted the charge of the area supposed to yield 1 crore dams or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs of rupees. After Akbar the Krori became merely the collector of revenue irrespective of the yield of the land under his charge.

1. The Krori was to keep a small militia under his jurisdiction to supply him with military force whenever necessary.

2. He was to supervise the work of the subordinates and watch that they did not demand in excess of the Government rate.

3. He was to demand Mahsul only from those places which were capable of paying the amount.

4. He was to collect the revenue at the right time assisted by the Amil, and deposit the money in the royal treasury giving a receipt to the Potdar.

5. He was instructed to send his estimates of abstract accounts and statements of income, and disbursement, as demanded by the regulations of the State.

6. He was instructed not to collect abwabs from the people under his charge.

**Amil.**—He was assisted by the Bitikchi, the Qanungo, the Patwari, and the Muqaddams. He was an impartial judge between the Government and the cultivators. He was expected to give his decisions, whenever there existed a difference between the demand of the State, and the amount payable by the ryots.

1. He was to have a thorough knowledge of the State regulations that were issued from time to time.

2. He was to encourage the agriculturists to extend their field of cultivation.

3. At the beginning of every season the Amil's work was to take from the Qanungo the statement of the revenue assessment of the last ten years and enquire into the existing conditions of the villages with the help of Qanungos and Chaudhris. He was to find out him-

self the actual area under cultivation and then compare it with the calculations and estimates of Qanungos.

4. If he found that the existing ploughs and other resources were not sufficient for cultivators, then he was to advance Taqavi loans which were to be payable at the first instalment of the coming year's revenue.

**Qanungo.**—Sircar calls him “a walking dictionary of the prevailing rules and practices and a store house of information as to procedure and precedents in the land history of the past.” The Qanungo was incharge of a pargana and had under him a Muqaddam and a Patwari.

1. The Qanungos were to record under their own jurisdiction the landed property of a villager, the amount of tax he paid, and the area of his land.

2. They were to report to the authorities the name of heirs succeeding a villager.

**The Finance Department or the Vizarat.**—The whole work of the Vizarat was divided into six divisions. They were as follows :—

1. Dewan of Crown lands
2. Dewan of Jagir lands
3. Dewan of Military accounts
4. Dewan of Factories and workshops
5. Treasury

Akbar placed a great trust in his Ministers and most of the routine work was carried on by them, but in matters of importance, where questions of policies were concerned, the signature of the Emperor was essential. Dr. R.P. Tripathi remarks on the working of the financial system of Akbar: "His policy obviously was to combine efficiency in administration with strong control by himself, and to evolve out a bureaucracy to be directed and managed by him."

Land revenue was the major source of income to the State. In order to improve the conditions of the cultivators and to bring about a higher standard of efficiency in the Vizarat, Revenue Boards were established from time to time.

**First Revenue Board.**—It was in 1573 when the Emperor returned from Gujarat that a Revenue Board was set up, which consisted of five officials, amongst which three were Mohammedans and two Hindus. The general management of the Board was entrusted to the Vakil. In 1575, when Todar Mal was appointed as the Mushrif Dewan, the Board was abolished.

**Second Revenue Board.**—In 1577, a new board was constituted under the joint responsibility of Todar Mal, Shah Mansur and Muzaffar Khan. But it came to an abrupt end when Todar Mal was asked to go to Bengal to suppress the mutiny while Khwaja Shah Mansur was dismissed.

**Third Revenue Board.**—In 1583, when Todar Mal was the Vazier a fresh attempt was made, and a Board was formed consisting of four officials.

Hindus and Muslims were given parity. It was mainly constituted to look after the interest of the Khalsa land. It is probable that four of them might have been held jointly responsible, but in practice it was different as each member was entrusted with a division into which the land was divided.

**Classifications of Land.**—Land was divided into three categories.

1. Khalsa Land was under direct possession of the Crown, and it was responsible for its management and collection of revenue. By the orders of the Central Government all minor taxes were repealed, though in some provinces the orders of the Central authorities were not kept up to the mark. Thus revenue from the Khalsa land was a major part of the income of the State.

2. Jagir Land was under the direct control of the Jagirdars who collected the revenue. During Akbar's reign most of the Jagirs were converted into Crown Land and the system of paying salaries was introduced. Wherever the Jagir system was retained, the Central Government reserved its right to increase or decrease the Jagir or to convert it into the Crown Lands.

3. Sayurghal Land was given to the agriculturists on free tenure. It paid no revenue to the State. Its fertility was low and its output was small.

**Jaziya as a Financial Measure.**—It was a tax which was levied on the non-Muslims by the State. Women, children, slaves, lunatics and men who possessed no property were excluded from this. As fiscal measures, Jaziya and Pilgrim's tax proved greatly beneficial to the State. But this tax was greatly unpopular amongst the Hindus. In 1564, Akbar resolved to renounce his right of claiming this tax from the non-Muslims. In the history of the Muslim taxation in Hindustan it was a unique step taken, and Akbar was the first monarch who made a formal declaration of repealing the tax.

**Imperial Treasury.**—The treasury was placed under the charge of a supervising officer called Mushrifi Khazana. Separate Treasuries were provided for jewellery, gold, silver and cash. The main treasury was divided into nine parts under a treasurer who was instructed to deal with a particular work as escheats and nazar, etc.

**Diwan-e-Sadat.**—This department was entrusted with the charge of granting gifts and allowances to the pious men, orphans, widows and scholars.



## LAW AND JUSTICE

**Emperor as the Judge.**—The king was the highest court of appeal in all cases. People had great trust in his judgment, as he was above bribery and corruption. But he dealt with a few cases of complicated nature. The absence of any rapid means of transport and communications made it difficult for the emperor to go to different provinces and dispense with the administration of justice.

The emperor could declare any law null and void, and many a times he reversed the judgment of the Kazis. He tried cases in the Hall of Private Audience on Wednesdays from morning till evening. It was attended by the judicial officers, the Kazis, the Adils (judges of common law), the Muftis, the Fatawas, the Kotwals and Superintendents of the law courts. The emperor enquired the facts from both the parties, heard their witnesses, made personal inquiries from the provincial governors, consulted the codes of law with the help of Kazis and then delivered his judgment.

Akbar gave orders that a man should not be put to death until he has received his third order, which he gave after due deliberation. He hated adulterers, seducers and corrupt

officials and insisted that justice should be administered without malice or corruption.

The provincial officers possessed limited powers in theory, but in practice exercised ample discretion and exercised wide powers. They were unscrupulous men and often took bribes, so the noble intention of the emperor of maintaining the rule of justice was often defeated by the officers.

**The Kazis.**—After the emperor the Sadr-us-Sadur and the chief Kazi were the two main authorities to try the civil and criminal cases.

The assistant Kazis were appointed by the Chief Kazi in the provincial capital, in every town and in big villages, where the population was a large one. In small villages, where there were no Kazis people had to go to a neighbouring village if they could afford to bear the expenses of litigation. The jurisdiction of the provincial Kazi was a wide one, and he had no assistants to help him in discharging his duties.

The Kazi tried civil and criminal cases, while important civil cases of a religious character were decided by the Sadr-us-Sadur. Criminal law was alike for Hindus and Muslims, and no differentiation was made on religious grounds, but in deciding the civil cases full

consideration was given to the customs and practices and the traditional laws of the Hindus. We have no information to state that the Kazis were assisted by Hindu Pandits or other learned men well versed in Hindu law, but there is an evidence to prove that traditional customs were highly honoured. For example the Muslim law of inheritance and succession could not be applied to the Hindus.

The Kazi was assisted by the Mufti, who was the expounder of the law. "The Mufti is the officer who expounds and applied the law to the cases and the Kazi is the officer who gives it operation and effect." (Saircar) the judgment was given by the Miradil.

There were no legal advisers, as the lawyers, highly proficient in the knowledge of civil and criminal law. Both the parties defended their own cases.

The Kazi was permitted to hold a court at his own place if he wished to. Generally, if the opponent party was a rich and an influential one, the Kazis failed miserably to do justice. They were not liberal in their outlook, and remained unresponsive to the general opinion of the people. Very often the justice was denied to the poor man.

The Kazis were instructed by the State not to accept presents from the people, or move freely amongst them. But in practice it was

quite different. We have evidence where a Kazi during the reign of Aurangzeb accumulated for himself 33 lakhs of rupees. Sircar remarks: "Though many of the Kazis were very learned lawyers, yet the primary and indispensable qualifications of a Kazi were in theory at least, honesty, impartiality, virtuousness and pure detachment from the society of the place." Bernier is of the opinion that the Kazis were not given sufficient powers to give relief to the poor people. He writes, "The Kazis or judges are not invested with sufficient powers to redress the wrongs of these unhappy people like the peasant, artisan, the tradesman oppressed by Jagirdars, governors and farmers of the revenue. This sad abuse of authority may not be felt in the same degree near capital cities or in the vicinity of large towns and sea ports because in those places the acts of gross injustice cannot easily be concealed from the court. The governor is absolute lord, in the strictest sense of the word. He is in his own person the intendant of justice, the parliament, the Presidial court and the assessor and receiver of the kings' taxes. In eastern countries, the weak and the injured are without any refuge whatever; and the only law that decides all controversies is the can and caprice of a governor."

**Law and its Sources.**—There was no system of written law for the general guidance of the

judicial officers. Quranic law was the ultimate authority recognised by the emperor and the judges. As different interpretations could be given to the principles of Quran and the sayings of the Hadis, so a brief study of the Muslim jurists and their interpretations was necessary for the judicial officers in discharging their duties. No legal principles were laid down for the judges.

The four schools of Islamic law were the Hanafi which was the most orthodox school, the Malaki, the Shafi and the Hanbali.

Customs and usages of the time were another source of law and an important one. Where no law was conceivable the cases were decided according to precedents.

The State issued royal farmans and regulations which were binding on the judges in matters of revenue taxation, etc. This constituted another source of law.

Malleson<sup>1</sup> writes: "The lines upon which justice was administered by the officers of Akbar were the same as those introduced by his Afghan predecessors. The Quran was the basis upon which the law rested. But precedents often modified the strict interpretation. Where law, moreover, leaned to severity, it was again modified by the instructions drafted by the emperor and his advisers. The leading features of these instructions were to temper

---

1 Akbar by G. B. Malleson.

justice with mercy." Crimes were defined as:—

- (a) Crime against God, *e.g.*, theft, adultery, drinking wine.
- (b) Crime against the Government, *e.g.*, rebellions, defaultment in the payment of revenue, etc.
- (c) Crime against man—*e.g.*, murder.

"It is rather strange to note that man-slaughter is not a violation of God's law nor of the King's peace but only a damage to the family of the murdered man, which can be settled by paying money as compensation to the next of kin of the victim without the executive head of the State or the judge of Canon Law having to take any further notice of it. It was only when the relatives of the murdered man refused to accept money damages and insisted on retaliation, that the Kazi had to pronounce the sentence of death and the executive to enforce it," remarks Sircar.

Capital punishment was inflicted on the highway robbers, on apostates from Islam, and on women sinners accused of immorality. We doubt very much whether in Akbar's time the apostates were put to death. His policy of religious tolerance would have not allowed this.

The punishments inflicted by the Kazis

were usually severe. Capital punishment could not be given without the sanction of the emperor. Theft was punishable with amputation of limbs. There was no regular jail system. The emperor had instructed that a man could be confined in a jail only for a day without trial. Those persons who were punished with long terms of imprisonment were confined in forts.

## MUGHAL ARMY

**Mughal Army.**—The Mughal Army may be roughly divided into the following divisions:—

1. Standing Army—maintained by the State and paid directly from the royal treasury.

2. Contingents held by the vassals of the emperor.

3. Contingents held by the Mansabdars.

4. Sawar Troops—extra horsemen kept by Mansabdars according to their status.

5. Dakhilis—paid by the State but attached to a Mansabdar under his command.

6. Ahadis—personal bodyguards of the emperor attached to a distinguished noble and paid by the State for 9½ months a year.

Akbar did not maintain a very large standing army, except in times of war when its number was considerably increased. It was paid by the State directly, and it incurred lot of expenses. Mr. Blochmann is of the opinion that Akbar had a standing army of 25,000; a figure which the other historians consider as unacceptable. The ruling chiefs maintained irregular contingents, and supplied



them to the emperor in times of need. They were the vassals of the Mughal emperor, recognized his sovereignty, and paid tribute to him. In times of war, they as his allies fought against his enemies. In the battle of Supa, we find that Raja Ram Chandra, and Raja Kuli Khan of Khandesh, died fighting in the battlefield. Akbar is said to have more than twenty vassals by his side always, ready to supply him troops when he demanded.

**The Mansabdari System.**—This system was an organization of the cavalry branch. In times of war Akbar depended mostly on the contingents supplied by the Mansabdar. Every officer of the administration excluding Kazis, and few others, was a Mansabdar in the army. He was made a commander of certain number of horses which determined his status as an officer. According to Abul Fazal there were sixty-six categories into which they were classified, but in actual working there were not more than 33 grades. The highest grade was Das Hazari, of a commander of ten Thousand, which was given only to princes and a few distinguished nobles. Prince Salim was given the rank of the Commander of ten thousand, Prince Murad of 8, Prince Daniyal of 7, and Prince Khusro of 5 thousand horses. The emperor was the sole authority in the appointment, promotion and dismissal of a Mansabdar. If he desired, he could promote a

humble man to the highest rank. The heirs of a **Mansabdar** were not entitled to the same privileges as enjoyed by their father after his death. According to the Escheat Law the State became the owner of the deceased's property, and his children had to start a new life. A **Mansabdar** was supposed to keep under his command trained men, horses and elephants, according to his rank. But in times of war he rarely supplied the emperor with his exact quota of men and horses.

**System of Paying Salaries.**—Before Akbar, an officer instead of getting a salary directly from the State was assigned a **Jagir** by the emperor in return for his civil and military services. He met his expenses by collecting the revenue from his **Jagir**. The emperor was the sole authority in allotting the **Jagir**, and the promotion and dismissal of a **Jagirdar** entirely depended upon him. This system saved the State from lot of inconveniences of collecting the revenue, while it could rely on the **Jagirdars** for help during times of need. The officers liked the system as it gave them financial stability, security and independence, and it greatly increased their power. But Akbar was very hostile for the continuance of such a system. One of his earlier measures was to abolish all the **Jagirs**, and convert them into Crown lands. He introduced the system of paying salaries to the officials and this put

them into a direct touch with the State. Most of the court nobles were against the idea of abolishing this system, but Akbar carried his reform in the teeth of grave opposition. It saved the State from fraudry and malpractices, and its revenue also was considerably increased.

**Sawar Troops:**—There were two ranks of a Mansabdar, his Zat, and Sawar, rank. According to his Zat rank, which was a personal one, an officer was made a Commander of certain number of say 5,000, 4,000 or 3,000 horses, while according to his Sawar rank he was entitled to draw an extra allowance for the upkeep of Sawars (in Urdu the word Sawar means horseman) corresponding to his status as an official. Thus a first class official, say a Commander of 3,000, could get a maintenance of 3,000 more Sawars. In the first category equality was maintained between Zat and Sawar rank. A second class officer's Sawar rank was half of his Zat rank, while a third class officer's Sawar rank was less than half of his Zat rank.

**Class I.**—A Madsabdar of 3,000, 3,000 Zat rank+3,000 Sawar rank. Entitled to draw allowance for 6000—total.

**Class II.**—A Mansabdar Commander of 3,000, 3,000 Zat rank+1,500 Sawar rank. Entitled to draw allowance for 4,500—total.

**Class III.**—A Mansabdar Commander of 3,000, 3,000 Zat rank + 1,000 Sawar rank. Entitled to draw allowance for 4,000—total.

**Dakhilis.**—Supplementary troops were kept by the emperor in addition to the contingents held by the Mansabdars. These were called Dakhilis (In Urdu language the word ‘Dakhili’ means to admit). They were directly paid from the royal treasury and attached to a Mansabdar’s contingent.

**Ahdīs** were brave and sturdy recruits who acted as the personal body guards of the emperor. They were paid by the State for 9½ months a year. Their status and salary were better than the other soldiers. They had a separate Bakshi of their own and were placed under the command of a distinguished noble.

The Mansabdari System had many defects. The State was constantly defrauded by unscrupulous Mansabdars who enlisted untrained men from the bazar streets and brought them for inspection clad in military uniforms. The evil was checked to a certain extent by compelling them to get the name, caste and community of the recruit registered. The branding regulation was introduced to check false mustering of the horses, and the State strived hard to uproot corruption, but in spite of its best efforts there remained many visible defects.

The other branches of the army were **Infantry**, **Artillery** and **Navy**. Akbar's infantry was not of a very high standard. No regular parades were held to train the people. Foot soldiers, coolies, guards all were recruited in this branch.

**Artillery.**—It formed an important part of the army. It was called by the name of **Topkhana** which was managed by **Mir Atish**. Heavy cannons, pistols, and match lock guns, were used in fighting. Deep ditches were dug and gunpowder was stored underneath the ground to check the advance of enemy's forces. The artillery force took direct orders from **Mir Atish** for the execution of its plans. All the pay bills of this branch were scrutinised by him. Guns were made in the South, but they were mostly imported. Akbar himself gave suggestions in the improvement of mechanical weapons in his palace workshops. The Mughals learnt the art of using artillery from the Turks of Constantinople, and they were not much advanced in this time. Portuguese sailors and Farangis were freely employed in army.

**Archery.**—The Mughals were experts in archery. Bows and arrows were freely used in fighting. In the battlefield expert archers were placed on the back of the elephants. The strength of a single expert archer was considered to be equal to one thousand horsemen.

Spears and other steel weapons were used by the Rajput cavalry forces while the Mughal forces used bows and arrows.

**Arrangement in the Battlefield.**—In the battlefield the Bakshi-ul-Mumalik was mainly responsible for arranging the divisions of the army. If the emperor was present the plans of fighting were submitted by him for his approval. The Bakshi-ul-Mumalik was assisted by a number of junior Bakshis who were deputed to different divisions. Sometimes the emperor chalked out the plans of fighting in the capital himself and they were strictly carried out. In the wars of succession, where the personal interest of the princes clashed, great secrecy was maintained in making the plans. In important battles the emperor and the Chief Commanding Officer minutely examined the movements of the higher ranks of the army. Mansabdars enjoying the highest rank of Das Hazari (of ten thousand) had under them Mansabdars of inferior ranks enjoying mansabs from nine thousand to one thousand.

If the emperor led the army himself all the mansabdars were subordinate to him, but if he was absent the Sipah-Salar who was the Commander-in-Chief controlled all of them. Usually, the head of a particular group belonged to the same community of which it was

composed of. A Rajput section had a Rajput Mansabdar, while an Afghan section had an Afghan Mansabdar. Cavalry always took the lead in the battlefield and infantry was posted behind. Trained elephants were used in large numbers in the campaigns.

### **An estimate of the Mughal Army.**

Mr. Blochmann's estimate of the	
Standing Army	25,000
Dr. Horn's total estimate of	
Infantry and Cavalry	42,62,315
Match-lock men and Infantry	38,77,557
Cavalry	3,84,758
Father Monserrate's estimate during	
Kabul Campaigns of Infantry and	
Cavalry	45,000
Von Noer's estimate of Cavalry	40,000

The Two Historians *Mr. Vincent Smith and Dr. Ishwari Parsad*:

Vincent Smith has a very poor opinion about the efficiency and standard of Akbar's army. He writes: "It is abundantly clear that Akbar's military organization was intrinsically weak although it was far better than his happy go-lucky neighbours. His army could not have stood for a moment against the better kinds of contemporary emperor troops."

Dr. Ishwari Parsad accepts the view that the Mughal army was full of many defects.

But he contradicts Dr. Smith's statement that the military organization of Akbar was 'intrinsically weak'. He writes of Smith: "He does not mention specifically any trials of strength between the Portuguese and the Mughal forces although he overrates the military strength of the former. Such a surmise is unnecessary as well as irrelevant. The Portuguese were superior to the Mughals in naval equipment, but from this it would be unfair to generalise about the efficiency of the army as a whole. An army which conquered Hindustan, a part of Deccan, and the Afghan regions, and which quelled formidable revolts in the most outlying provinces of the empire, and overawed the Uzbeks and Persians cannot have been so poor and inefficient as Dr. Smith supposed."



## THE ESCHEAT SYSTEM

**The Escheat System.**—The Escheat system implied that the State confiscated a man's property after his death and gave to his children what it pleased.

Captain Hawkins observes: "The custom of the Mughal Emperor is to take possession of his noblemen's treasure when they die, and to bestow on their children what he pleaseth; but commonly he dealt well with them, possessing them with their father's land dividing it amongst them and unto the eldest son he hath a very great respect, who in time receiveth the full title of his father."

The deceased's property never went to the sovereign unless he died without a legal heir. Theoretically it belonged to the Muslim community. Some of the farmans issued by the government were as follows :—

"Whenever a servant of the State dies leaving no heir and owing nothing to the treasury on account of advances made to him deposit his property in the Bait-ul-Mal. If he has left any heir attach his property three days after his death."

2. "If the property exceeds the amount

of his debt to the State take that amount only and deliver the balance to his heir after the latter has legally established his right."

3. "If the dead man owed nothing to the State, give his whole property to his heir after legal proof."

The reason for introducing this system was that the officers who held jagirs and took the revenue did not settle their accounts with the State during their life time. The Government officials were constantly in debt to the State ; they took money in advance and never paid off their debts, so if Escheat system would not have been put into operation the State would have been a great loser. Moreover, in those days the land revenue was the only source of income to run the administration, and without the law of Escheat the State could not have been able to make up the deficit, caused by the bad debt. The confiscation of the property by the State enabled it to compensate its own losses, while returning the surplus amount to the heirs of the deceased.

Sircar says: "Thus the military accounts could never be cleared and no officer's exact dues and liabilities to the State could be ascertained in his life time and even after his death. Under the circumstances, the safest course for the emperor was to Escheat the dead man's property immediately after his death

and then think of settling his account with the Government treasury.”

**Bait-ul-Mal.**—A special Store Department under the name of Bait-ul-Mal was created, where, in theory, went all the property of the deceased without any legal heir, but in practice all the property confiscated went to this department until the accounts of the State were settled. According to the Muslim law the wealth of this department and its income could only be utilised on charitable institutions. The king had no right to take it for himself.

The effects of this system were disastrous politically. Economically it served a good purpose of the State as well as the individuals, but politically, it stopped the growth of a strong aristocracy, which always provides a great check on the royal autocracy because this kind of nobility has not to depend upon the king for its maintenance. It might be defended on the grounds that it enabled the Government to get rid of a class of hereditary peerage serving no useful purpose and detrimental both to the interest of the people as well as of the State. But we must bear in mind that in those days free institutions were unknown. The Emperor's will was law. He could put down any man to death without proving the charges against him or he could elevate a humble man to the highest position

in the State. He could levy any number of taxes pass or annul any law. Private liberty was unknown. The only course left to the people was to rise into a successful rebellion against the oppression and despotism of the king but if the king was strong and efficient even that was an impossibility. So the existence of a hereditary peerage was essential to safeguard the public and private liberty of the people.

Moreover, the nobles squandered money and lived a life of luxury and excessive indulgence knowing that their children would be little benefited by their fortunes. This prevented the accumulation of capital, which is an essential factor for the economic and cultural growth of every country.

On the Escheat Law Sircar<sup>1</sup> observes: "It made the Mughal nobility a selfish band, prompt in deserting to the winning side in every war of succession or foreign invasion because they knew that their lands and even personal property was not legally assured to them but depended solely on the pleasure of the king *defacto*."

1 Mughal Administration—Sircar.

## LITERATURE

The whole literature of this period can be roughly divided into four divisions.

1. Historical Literature.
2. Translations.
3. Hindi Literature proper—Prose and Poetry.
4. Persian Literature proper—Prose and Poetry.

**Historical Literature,** Mr. Sarcar writes, is the gift of the Muslims. The Hindus of the pre-Muslim days have not produced any outstanding works in History, and even what little has been written lacks any chronological sense. The credit of having produced finest literature in history, however, goes to the Muslims who came from Persia. In this chapter the general historical literature of the Mughal times with special reference to Akbar's rule will be discussed. The patronage extended by Mughal emperors, specially Akbar, afforded ample opportunities to historians and men of letters to produce fine literature, prose and poetry.

**Ain-i-Akbari and Akbarnamah.**—The most remarkable works of history are Ain-i-Akbari and Akbarnamah. Both of these were

written by Abul Fazal the trusted friend and court historian of Akbar. He wrote under the royal patronage, and all the facilities which were possible were provided for him by the State. It is said that he obtained his material directly from the record office. Abul Fazal was gifted with extraordinary literary talents, and among the medieval historians he was the most accomplished one. In his two books, he describes the whole career of Akbar, his conquests, his religious policy, his social and administrative reforms, and of Mughal culture and society. No aspect of the life of the emperor he has left untouched.

Most of the present historians think that Abul Fazal instead of portraying a true picture of the state of affairs, presents an ideal one. Sir Jadunath Sircar, the distinguished scholar, gives a critical view of his works when he writes: "He is an insufferable rhetorician and even when he intends to tell a fact, he buries it under a mass of figures of speech and round-about expression. His work therefore does not give us as much help in drawing a detailed picture of the administrative machinery though in statistical portion it is detailed and correct. We are oppressed by a sense of vagueness and unreality of the picture as we go through the descriptive parts of the Ain."

Abul Fazal has been accused of concealing many facts for fear of damaging the reputa-

tion of the emperor. Some affirm that Akbar was not worthy of the praise which Abul Fazal bestowed on him. Henry Beveridge who has translated his Akbarnamah into English is of the opinion that his style is tortuous and obscure one and that he was a shameless flatterer, his flattery being a part of his admiration of Akbar as a hero. Badauni the contemporary historian who was greatly orthodox in his views disliked Abul Fazal immensely. He envied him for his overpowering influence over the emperor, and thought that Akbar's reading and writing combined together with his extraordinary powers of mind and intellect made Abul Fazal believe that Akbar was a superman. But with all his limitations and imperfections we are greatly indebted to him for his works, and the important information that he has given.

**Muntakhab-ut-Twarikh** or **Tarikh-i-Badauni** is much valued as a book being written by a great critic of Akbar, and his policy. Abdul Qadir was the son of Maluk Shah, but was called Badauni being a native of Badon in Rohilkhand. He was an orthodox Sunni Muslim and has written the book from that standpoint. Vincent Smith has attached great importance to his work as being a "check on the lurgid panegyric composed by latitudinarians (Abul Fazal)." It supplies us with a great deal of information on almost every aspect of Akbar's policy and administration. Blochmann

says : "It is much prized as written by an enemy of Akbar whose character in its grandness and in its failings is much more prominent than in Akbarnamah or Ain-i-Akbari or Masir-i-Rahimi."

Badauni disliked Akbar's policy of religious toleration and hated to see Akbar among his non-Muslim associates. In fact he associated himself with everything that was anti-Hindu. He was greatly afraid of Akbar for his prejudicial views and kept his works concealed during his life time. It was only some years after in the reign of Jahangir that he was able to bring forth his works in public. One is amused to find that through all his writings he has used the words 'Infidel' and 'Kafir' for Hindus. In this book he has given a detailed review of Akbar's religious policy and the sketches of the famous personalities of his time.

**Tabakat-i-Akbari** or the 'Annals of Akbar' has been written by Nizam-ud-din. He was a highly placed official in Akbar's regime. In his book, he gives a record of Akbar's conquests, and of other important events, but has not given any criticism of Akbar's religious policy which is most important. Smith thinks that "the book is dry, colourless, chronicle of external events. It completely ignores Akbar's religious vagaries and seldom or never attempts to offer reflections or criticisms of the events and actions recorded."



**Twarikh-i-Humayun** was written by Jawhar, who was a personal attendant of Humayun. It is of great historical importance as it gives a complete account of Akbar's birth, childhood and marriage. Besides these, other important historical works are Akbar-namah of Faizi Sarhindi, Ferishita's history, and Masir-i-Rahimi of Abdul Baqi. The histories compiled during Jahangir's reign are Masir-i-Jahangiri, and Iqbalnamah-i-Jahangiri; those written during Shah Jahan's rule are Shahjahannamah by Inayat Khan, and Padshahnamah by Abdul Hamid. Masir-i-Alamgir, Khulastat-ul-Twarikh, and Alamgiri, the last three written during Aurangzeb's reign.

**Babar's Memoirs.**—Among the history of Asian monarchs, Babar was the most interesting and colourful personality. He was a man of great letters, well versed in both the languages Turki and Persian. Originally he wrote his autobiography in Turki, which was later on translated into Persian during Akbar's reign by Abdul Rahim (Bairam's son). In his memoirs he has very vividly portrayed his own picture, his likes and dislikes, his successes and failures, and his virtues and vices. It is one of the finest piece of Oriental literature ever produced. As a writer he was frank and honest. About India and her people he had a poor impression. The wild life of Farghana, and Samarquand, its charms and

pleasures always haunted him. He writes (translated by Mrs. A.S. Beveridge): "Hindustan is a country of few charms. Its people have no good looks, of social intercourse, paying and receiving visits there is none, of genius and capacity none, of manners none, in handicrafts and works there is no symmetry, method or equality ; there are no good horses, no good dogs, no grapes, musk, melons or first-rate fruits, no ice or cold water." His daughter Gulbadan Begum was a greatly accomplished lady. Her valuable contribution is Humayunnamah which is an excellent history on Humayun's reign.

**Jahangir's Memoirs** is an autobiography of Jahangir. He, though inferior to his father and grand-father in genius and character, was no less a great scholar of art and literature. His autobiography is frank and honest, though at times, he has unnecessarily praised himself. In his memoirs he admits his crime of the murder of Abul Fazal and his other vices.

**Translations.**—During Akbar's rule some of the famous books were translated. The great religious book of the Hindus, the Atharva Veda, was translated from Sanskrit into Persian by Haji Ibrahim Sirhandi. Translations were also made of Greek and Arabic works. Abdur Rahim the distinguished poet was asked to translate Babar's Memoirs from Turki into Persian. By the orders of the emperor Badauni

translated the great epic Mahabharata into Persian which was re-named Razmnama. He was an orthodox Muslim and disliked to undertake the work, but the emperor forced him to do it. He writes in his book : "But such is my fate, to be employed on such works. Nevertheless I console myself with the reflection that what is pre-destined must come to pass." He also translated Valmiki's Ramayana into Persian. Faizi, the brother of Abul Fazal, rendered into Persian 'Lilavati' a well known production on arithmetic. Shahjahan's son, Dara, was a great scholar of Hindi literature, and had a keen interest in universal religions. A man of cosmopolitan views, he was above the prejudices of caste, creed or colour and sought good wherever he found it. Under his patronage the great books of Hindu philosophy like Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads were translated into Persian. His well known works are 'Majmua-al-Bahrin, which is a composition on Hindi theology. Sakinat-ul-Aulia contains biographical sketches of some of the famous Muslim saints.

**Hindi Literature.**—During Akbar's rule Hindi literature reached at a new zenith of its glory. Akbar was a great patron of art and learning and extended his patronage freely to the deserving scholars irrespective of their cast, creed or colour. Hitherto, Hindi as a language received no encouragement from the hands

of Muslim rulers, who were alien in faith, blood, and character, to the bulk of non-Muslim population. They despised everything that was associated with Hindus, their language, culture, and religion. But the policy of widest religious toleration adopted by Akbar acted as a stimulant in the development of Hindi literature. Akbar himself took personal interest in the learning of Sanskrit and Hindi. The result was, that scholars gathered together in the Mughal Court from all parts of India and some of them were granted monthly allowances by the emperor. The Hindu writers and poets felt secured, that their work would be appreciated, and they would be no longer subject to religious persecution. Not only the Hindus, but the Muslims also freely contributed towards Hindi literature.

**Abdur Rahim Khan Khana** was one of the greatest poet of this period. He was the son of Bairam Khan and Salima Begum (Gulbadan Begum's daughter). After the death of his father Akbar took his guardianship who was only four years old at that time. In due course of time he became one of the greatest nobles of the court. In Hindi literature he is popularly known as Rahim Das. He was an eminent scholar of his time, and a master of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit. But of all, his contribution towards Hindi literature is a splendid one. He composed verses mostly on

morals. He advocated the virtue of right living and thinking, of truthfulness, honesty and kindness. Like Kabir his poetry was simple in form, powerful in expression and appealing to human imagination. His works are greatly admired specially in the North.

Abdur Rahim is reputed to have translated Babar's Memoirs from Turki into Persian. His important works in Hindi are Rahim Dohavali which is a collection of 'dohas,' Barba-Naqika, Shring-ghar Sorath, Nagar Shobha, and Ras-Ranch-Dhyai.

**Keshav Das** was another distinguished poet of this period. He was a Brahman by birth, belonging to Orchha. His poetry is rather difficult to understand, and in simplicity of language, and excellence of thoughts, he is inferior to Rahim Das. But his 'dohas' along with Kabir and Rahim are widely read. His remarkable productions are Kavi-Priya, which is a composition on good poetry, Ram Chandrika, Vi-Gian-Gita, and Alankrit-Manjari.

Most of Akbar's courtiers were men of great letters. Raja Birbal, the trusted friend of the emperor, was endowed with a great poetical and musical talent. He wrote verses in Hindi and was distinguished with the title of Kavi Raj (Poet Laureate) from Akbar. Tan Sen the celebrated singer also wrote poetry in Hindi. Amongst his famous compositions are Sanger Sur and Rag Mola. Beside these, others were

Raja Mohar Das, Karan, Nar Hari Sahai, and Gang Kair. The eminent Sufi poets who wrote verses in Hindi were Vari Sahib, and Bulla Shah.

**Tulsi Das and Sur Das.**—The poet Tulsi Das was in no way connected with the Mughal Court. His name has not been mentioned in any of the histories of Akbar written by contemporary historians. Tulsi and Sur Das are the two gems of Hindi literature. Their names are immortal and will be remembered through the ages to come. Tulsi Das is celebrated for his great production Ramayana in which he has described the whole story of Ram Chandra. Earlier in the 4th century Valmiki, the great sage, had written the same story, but there is a remarkable difference in the theological outlook of the two writers.

Tulsi Das has treated Rama as the incarnation of God. The pure and lofty moral with which he has treated the subject deserves great appreciation. The whole story has been divided into seven chapters, one dealing with the childhood of Rama, another of his stay in Ayodhya and others of his struggles in exile. Tulsi Das had an abounding love for Rama as his devotee. He formed no different sect as Kabir, Nanak or Ramanuj but it has been widely accepted that “the Ramayana has been the most potent factor in making Vaishnavism the accepted cult of the vast

majority of Hindus in North India today.”—(Grieson). Tulsi Das has depicted Rama as the ideal son, brother and husband and has laid stress on one’s duty towards his fellowmen. He advocates the virtue of right living and thinking. Sir George Grieson, the great scholar of Hindi literature, praises his works and writes : “As a work of art it has to European readers its prolicities and tastes.” But he holds “that the poem is a masterpiece.” The book is written in Avadhi Bhasha though many words of Braj Bhasha have been freely used.

The blind bard Sur Das was the leading poet of Krishna cult at this time. He is reputed in Hindi poetry for his excellent poetical compositions, and for the sweetness of his styles. He has produced various episodes from Bhagwat Purana of the life of Lord Krishna. The central theme of his poetry is love for him as his devotee. He has nearly composed 75,000 verses in Hindi. His language is Braj Bhasha and his most remarkable production is Sur Sagar. It is a matter of great controversy in Hindi literature as to who is a greater poet Tulsi or Sur Das. Undoubtedly, it is held, that the Ramayana of Tulsi Das is a unique production in the whole of Oriental literature, but the style and charm of Sur’s verses are not found in Tulsi Das’s works.

**Persian.**—Persian was the Court language of the Muslims. Since the time of Sikandar

Lodi the Hindus also began to develop their taste for Persian. Very gradually it began to exercise its influence over Hindi and other native languages. The Hindus freely introduced Persian and Arabic words in their language, and also the legal and technical terms were adopted in the course of their daily contact with the Muslims with somewhat different meanings than they had been used originally. Together with this, the Hindi language also influenced Persian considerably, with the result that a remarkable difference arose between the two, the Persian of Persia and the Persian of India. One was influenced by Turkish, French, Arabic and Russian, while the other was influenced by the native languages. The Muhammedans migrating directly from Persia and Arabia wrote a refined and pure idiom than the Muhammedans who had settled in India.

Under Sher Shah Suri duplicate records were kept in administration, one in Hindi and the other in Persian. Hitherto, it was optional for non-Muslims to learn the language of their rulers. But during Akbar's time, when Todar Mal became the revenue chief, he ordered that henceforth all Governmental records, farmans, and sanads should be written and kept in Persian only. Now it became essential for Hindus to learn the language if they desired to join the Imperial Service. The result of



this was that Hindus began to master Persian in great numbers so much so that after a short period they became the Persian teachers of Muslims. Hindu munshis and Hindu accountants were freely employed by Muslim chiefs to draft their letters in Persian. This factor greatly helped in the growth of a new literary medium Urdu, which became essentially the language of both the communities.

**Sanskrit.**—Excluding Akbar all the Mohamedan rulers were anti-Hindu in their views. The Muslim rule hampered on the whole the cultural growth of the Hindus. In the earlier period their places of worship were demolished and the centres of their culture were all sacked with the result that the learning of Sanskrit was discouraged totally. Although under Akbar the Sanskrit scholars were greatly patronised and its study received a fresh stimulant, but as a language Sanskrit lost its popularity long ago. No outstanding work was produced except translations and commentaries on ancient books.

## PAINTING

Indian painting may be roughly divided into four schools, the Buddhist School, the Hindu School, the Muhammedan School, and the Modern School. Here we are not concerned either with the first one or the last one, but mainly with the two schools, Hindu and Muhammedan which fall within the range of our subject.

The earlier Indian artists drew their inspiration from the Buddhist School. Its frescos expressed the sentiments and the ideals of the Indian people in a most bewitching manner. In fact, the influence of Buddhism is overwhelmingly felt in the stone carvings of Ajanta. The belief held by some of the western scholars that the art of painting was unknown to the Indians is entirely a false one. No doubt, this art declined during the pre-Mughal days, as it did not receive any encouragement from the hands of Muslim kings, and we are left with very few paintings of that period to make a correct estimate as regards to the standard of their works, but to hold the view that painting was foreign to the Indian soil is an erroneous one.

**The Muhammedan School of Painting.**—  
Painting was a highly specialized art in Persia.

It received great impetus from the rulers of Safavid dynasty who were great patrons of art and literature. The leader of the Muhammedan School of painting was Bihzad, an eminent artist of the time who is considered as 'Raphael of the East.' Persia, its life, manners and the culture of her people, the ideals of her thought affected India greatly. Whether in the political, or in the cultural field the Mughal rulers looked to Persia for their guidance. The Muhammedan School which came to be known as the Mughal School, and the Hindu School which came to be known as the Rajput School took their incentive and encouragement from the Mughal rulers, with the result that when the empire flourished, art and painting rose to the highest level, and when it declined the royal patronage was removed and the art of painting fell into decay.

**Mughal School.**—Babar was a born artist. He was a man who was endowed with extraordinary literary gifts, but was unluckily denied the opportunity to learn the art of drawing and painting. His son Humayun who was a wanderer for the greater part of his life was no less interested in the fine arts. The distinguished painter of Persia, Mir Sayyid Ali with whom he was acquainted at Tabriz, joined him in Kabul in 1550. Sayyid Ali was asked to prepare a full size pictorial copy of a famous Persian classic the Amir Hamzah

(Dastur-i-Amir-Hamzah). He undertook the difficult task with the help of Abdus Samad Khan, a famous artist of the time, and with a few of his assistants. After seven years of strenuous work four volumes were prepared out of which only sixty pages have survived. Some of its portions have been preserved in the Industrial Museum of Vienna, and others in Victoria Albert Museum at South Kingston.

After the death of Humayun, no remarkable progress was made, for the first fifteen years, in the field of art and painting owing to the unsettled condition of the empire. Mir Sayyid Ali continued to stay in the Mughal Court a few years more and then he left for Mecca entrusting the whole charge of his work to Abdus Samad Khan who became the real founder of the Mughal School of painting. Under the royal patronage of Akbar, eminent artists gathered together from all parts of India. Akbar kept under his personal control the work of all great artists which were about hundred in number. Their work was weekly inspected by the emperor. The Daroghas and the clerks laid before him the paintings and drawings of the artists, who were rewarded according to the standard of their art. In 1583, Farrukh Beg, another distinguished painter, joined the Moghul Court, and brought with him an individual style of his own which affected the paintings of the latter period of the Mughal

School. After the death of Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad Khan, Farrukh Beg became the leader of the School.

It was during the reign of Jahangir that the art of painting reached the zenith of its glory. Jahangir was a born artist himself and a great connoisseur of art. The personality of the emperor, and the keen interest which he took, acted as stimulant in the development of art and painting. During his rule two distinguished portrait painters from Samarquand Muhammad Nadir and Muhammad Murad came to the Mughal court. Another artist Abul-i-Husan was honoured with the title of Nadir-uz-Zaman (Wonder of the Age) by the emperor. Amongst the Hindu artists Daswath was a talented painter. Unfortunately his brilliant career was cut short by suicide. Other artists Kesudeva, Baswan and Lal, were the pupils of Abdus Samad Khan. The two Gujrati artists Bhim and Sur were reputed for the excellence of their drawing and painting.

**Technique, Form and Style of the Mughal School.**—Percy Brown<sup>1</sup> remarks about the work of Mughal School: “Inspired by the founders of the dynasty it reflected in its subject matters and in its invention the mind of the ruling Power—while the Mughal School

---

1 Mughal Painting in India by Percy Brown.

confined itself to portraying somewhat the materialistic life of the court with its State functions, processions, hunting expeditions, and all the picturesque although barbaric pageantry of an affluent oriental dynasty." The style and subject matter of the Mughal art is "material, exotic, and eclectic", while the Hindu art is "spiritual and symbolic." The Mughal School excels in the decorative composition of its work, and is distinguished from the paintings of the Rajput School for its calligraphic form.

The Mughal School had no immediate contact with the masses. In fact it was never meant for the common people. Only the ruling chief and princes were its patrons and connoisseurs. Outside the court little was known of its existence. In the beginning, the art was highly of an aristocratic character, but with the lapse of time it assumed some democratic elements.

**The Deccan School** is an offshoot of the Mughal School of painting. The conquest of Deccan by Aurangzeb introduced the Mughal style to the Deccani artists. It is a matter of great controversy, whether Deccani School produced any of its works actually or not, as in those days that place was inhabited by raiders and marauders, whose main occupation was looting. Thus intellectually those people were unfit to produce anything artistic. In

the opinion of some people who have made a research in this subject, the paintings which are now handled down as the work of Deccan School are either stolen or looted from the Mughal court by the Peshwas. Its technique, style and form, and the manner of its execution are similar to that of the Mughal School. However, it is left to the reader to form his own opinion in the light of these arguments.

**Different Kalms.**—Another interesting feature of the Mughal School is that in certain localities the influence of a particular place is clearly manifested in their paintings. There are peculiar Kalms which differentiate the paintings of one locality from another. There is the Jaipur Kalm, the Kangiri Kalm, the Pahiri Kalm, the Rajasthani Kalm, the Deccani Kalm, the Kashmiri Kalm, and the Delhi Kalm. The native painters of Akbar's court copied the style of Chinese painting which was introduced by way of Khurasan and Bukhara and intermingled their style with their own.

**Painting Under the Later Mughals.**—Under the rule of Jehangir painting was at the peak of its glory. Patronage afforded by him and his father is unparalleled in the cultural history of any nation. His successor Shah Jahan was more interested in architecture than in painting. During his reign the number

of artists was considerably reduced, while under Aurangzeb painting remained a totally neglected art. Percy Brown<sup>1</sup> remarks: "The Mughal School of painting in India coincides with the period of Mughal dynasty. Coming into patronage during the reign of Akbar in the later half of the sixteenth century it attained its apogee under the imperial diletante Jehangir. The reign of his successor Shah Jahan marks the first step in its decline, while under the unsympathetic rule of Aurangzeb its death knell was rung. It lingered on a decadent art under the Nawabs of Oudh until the end of eighteenth century and practically ceased to exist with the advent of British rule. As a School of painting its duration was short extending even two and a half centuries and it has been aptly referred to as not exactly a School, but more of a brilliant episode in the history of Indian Art."

**The Imperial Library.**—The artists had at their disposal a huge collection of books concerning art and literature in the Imperial Library of Akbar. It had a series of Arabian manuscripts from Baghdad, and Tumorid manuscripts, and also the works of Safavid School of Persian painters like Bihzad. The artists gathered together and studied the way and forms of the ancient art. Their study

---

1 Mughal Painting in India.



affected the paintings of the later period of Mughal School.

**The Rajput School** was the Hindu School of painting. Originally the Hindu artists were employed by the feudatory hill chiefs. The Mughal emperor Akbar extended his patronage to all artists, irrespective of their caste, creed, or colour, with the result that they flocked to the Mughal court from all parts of India. The Hindu artists who were greatly skilled in wall decorations adapted themselves to the form and technique of the Mughal School.

Rajput Art is a people's art, democratic and majestic in form. Apart from having taken the subjects of Hindu mythology the artists of this school depicted the life of the common people, their beliefs, manners and traditions characterising the folklore of the age with an unabiding interest. The Pahari artists who belonged to the hills of Nurpur, Basohli, Chamba and Jammu painted pictures from the Indian classics. Romance, Love and Devotion were symbolised in the visualisation of popular divinities like Shankar Parvati and Radha Krishna. Myths and legends were represented, by giving them human and superhuman forms. Besides these, Rag Mala series which are a collection of Indian musical compositions were depicted as each being a 'coloured interpretation of the particular melody with which

it is associated.' The Rajput artists also excelled in miniature painting. Their representation of womanhood had a supreme charm; their drawings were dainty and graceful. Unlike the artists of the Mughal School, who only 'reflected the mind of the ruling Power' the painters of the Rajput Schools were free to express their personality. The chief features of this school are 'delicacy of time, brilliancy of colour and minuteness of decorative detail.'

**A Verdict by Percy Brown.**—The distinguished scholar Percy Brown has made a vast study in the field of Indian painting. On dominant feature in the whole history of Mughal painting and architecture, writes Percy Brown, that very little is known of the actual character and life of the artists. The great painters of the Renaissance period Michael Angelo, Raphael, Le-ni-ardo-Di-Vinci stand unrivalled in the history of art because of the fact that their form and technique, their ideas and aspirations, have been handed down from generation to generation. "But the story of Indian artists," remarks Percy Brown<sup>1</sup>, "if such a meagre record can be called presents nothing tangible. The painter, whether Buddhist, Rajput or Mughal, walks through the pages of history a vogue indefinite, elusive being. Only his pictures remain to prove that he was a virile character absorbed in his

---

<sup>1</sup> Mughal Painting in India.

work." Indian painting is an anonymous art in his opinion, because, he points out that with the exception of a few Mughal paintings the whole art is nameless. Further he remarks that "its root never penetrated into the subsoil of Indian people, but as a splendid pictorial record of Moghul pageantry and power it holds a prominent position in the history of Indian painting."

## MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE

The Mughals are known all over the world for their love of architecture. Beginning from Babar till the end, excluding Aurangzeb who was a puritan, all the monarchs were great builders. But the history of Mughal architecture starts from the period of Afghan rulers. Most of the early buildings erected in Babar's time have perished, except his two mosques of Panipat and Sambhal. In his Memoirs, he writes: "In Agra alone and of the stone-cutters belonging to that place only I everyday employed on my palaces 680 persons; and in Agra, Sikri, Biana, Dholpur, Gwalior and Koel, there were everyday employed 1491 stone-cutters." Humayun remained a wanderer for the greater part of his life and had little time to undertake the construction of palatial buildings. Whatever little he had constructed has also perished. He is said to have built a palace at Agra and a mosque.

Sher Shah, the Afghan ruler, was a great builder. He constructed the famous Grand Trunk Road, besides having built many gardens and tanks for the benefit of his subjects. His historical buildings consist of a mosque at Purana Qila and his tomb which was probably completed by his son Salim. The construction

of his buildings is of a Pathan style, simple in form and design.

**Influence of Hinduism.**—Hindusim exercised a considerable influence on the constructions of Akbar's buildings. It is probable that he, an advocate of widest religious toleration, employed chiefly Hindu artisans together with Muslims. In the later buildings of Mughal rulers no trace of Hindu influence is found in any of the buildings. But in the buildings of Akbar one finds an amalgamation of two styles Hindi and Persian. Sometimes one predominates the other, and at other time the other predominates. "As a matter of fact the architectural schools of the period, whether Hindu or Muslim, are really two branches of the same tree, for both spring from the same root. Their purposes differ but the significance of their form remains the same," remarks Tarachand in his book the 'Influence of Islam on Indian Culture.'

**Akbar the Great Builder.**—Akbar built a number of buildings at Agra, the most outstanding of these is the Fort which is popularly known as the Jahangiri Mahal. The construction was started in 1564, and it took eight years to complete it. The Hindu influence is abundantly felt here; there are no arches and the form and design of the building exhibits the Hindu style completely. Diwan-i-Aam and Diwan-i-Khas are the chief constructions in

the palace. The tomb of Humayun which was completed by Akbar is different from his other buildings. It is situated among the ruins of Old Delhi and is essentially of a Persian style. Akbar's tomb at Sikandra is absolutely different from that of his father. It is more of a Hindu model than of a Muslim one. It has one huge gate, and an extensive garden, and in the centre stands the tomb on a raised platform. His other fort at Allahabad has not survived except its great hall. It is said to have consisted forty pavilions.

The most magnificent construction of his time are his palaces of Fatehpur Sikri. The city was planned between 1570 and 1580. It is surrounded by a wall from three sides and has got nine gates. There is a great mosque known as Jama Masjid. It is crowned with three domes, and is the most magnificent of its kind in India. It is beautifully adorned and has been described as the 'glory of Fatehpur.' But the grandest structure is the Buland Darwaza, the Victory Gate, which was erected to commemorate his conquest of Gujarat. It is 176 feet high and is one of the most splendid constructions of Akbar's time. There is the tomb of the famous Saint Salim Chishti. It is made of white marble, except its dome, where red sandstone is used. Beside these, other palatial buildings are the Diwan-i-Khas and the Diwan-i-Aam. There is Birbal's house which is exquisitely adorned

with sandstone carvings. There is Abul Fazal's house and Princess Jodha Bai's palace, known as Hawa Mahal, and Panch Mahal. The view of the whole structure exhibits Hindu and Muslim features. In the construction of pillars and porches, the Hindu architecture predominates over the Muslim one.

**Irrelevant Criticism of Dr. Vincent Smith.** Fatehpur Sikri has been described by Vincent Smith,<sup>1</sup> the distinguished Anglo-Indian historian, as "the freak of an irresponsible autocrat acting under the impulse of overpowering superstitious emotion and enjoying the sensation of absolute freedom from financial limitations." Smith admits at the same time that nothing ever was created before, or can be created in the ages to come. It has been called 'a romance in stone' which still reminds the world of the glory and grandeur of the Great Mughal, the benevolent ruler, who guided the destinies of millions. Gazing the sun on Indian horizon, he was determined to rule all his subjects alike, irrespective of their caste, creed or community, and this is the legacy which he has left behind for the generations to come, and for which we are all proud of. Smith unnecessarily criticizes when he writes that the whole structure of the city is a 'patrifaction of a passing mood in Akbar's strange nature, begun and finished at the lightning speed while that mood lasted inconceivable and

---

1 Akbar, The Great Mughal by Smith.

impossible at any other time or in any other circumstances." Lane Pool<sup>1</sup> remarks: "Nothing sadder or more beautiful exists in India than the deserted city, the silent witness of a vanished dream."

Akbar also built four temples in Brindaban in honour of Lord Krishna. The most famous among these is the temple of Govind Deva. In the words of Growse, "It is the most impressive religious edifice that Hindu art has ever produced, at least in Upper India."

**Architecture Under the Later Mughals.**—Akbar's successor Jahangir was more interested in painting than in architecture. He built one magnificent mosque with enamelled tiles. The style of the building is Persian. In Decca he constructed some splendid buildings which now lie in a ruined state. Nurjahan, the famous empress, constructed a tomb at Agra in the memory of her father. This tomb of Itimad-ud-Daula is a two-storeyed building. It has open pavilions and octagonal towers and is built of white marble. Of all the Mughal emperors Shah Jahan was the most magnificent builder. His palace at Delhi known as the Red Fort, which is situated on the edge of Jumna, is one of the splendid constructions in the whole of Asia. On all the four sides, it is surrounded by a high wall made of red sandstone. Inside the fort the chief buildings are, Nobut Khana—

---

1 Muslim Rule by Lane Pool.



the music hall, Diwan-i-Aam—the hall of audience, and Diwan-i-Khas—the hall of private audience, which is beautifully decorated with precious stones. Round the roof of this hall is inscribed the famous verse, “If there is a heaven on earth it is this, it is this, it is this.” There is the Rang Mahal which contains a bath and private apartments. It has many extensive gardens, open pavilions and fountains.

The most important building of Shah Jahan is Taj Mahal at Agra which is one of the greatest wonders of the world. It is one of the most unique, magnificent sepulchre ever made. The building was constructed to the memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. It is not only one of the finest piece of architecture produced “but the proud passion of an emperor’s love.” The building is renowned for the delicacy of its style and for the charm of its construction. It is built of white marble. Fergusson writes: “Taj Mahal at Agra is almost the only tomb that retains its grandeur in anything like its pristine beauty, and there is not perhaps in the whole world a scene where nature and art so successfully combine to produce a perfect work of art as within the precincts of the far famed mausoleum.” Shah Jahan erected a mosque known as Moti Masjid which is built of white marble. It is not as magnificent as his other buildings are. The Juma Masjid at Delhi is constructed on a

larger scale than Moti Masjid. Red stone and white marble has been used in this building. It has a magnificent gateway and is adorned with two beautiful minarets. Aurangzeb is not reputed to have constructed any remarkable structure. He was a puritan and had neither the means, nor any taste to build fine palaces and mausoleums. He made few additions in the Delhi Fort and built a mosque in Benaras by demolishing the Vishwanath temple.

**Fergusson's Theory.**—Fergusson is of the opinion that in the beginning of 17th century, Italian artists were brought from Florence and they were responsible for introducing in India the art of 'inlaying' the marble with precious stones. He says, that in Shah Jahan's buildings it became a chief characteristic of his style. He mentions the name of Austin, or Augustin Bordeaux, whom he thinks Shah Jahan employed as one of his chief architects, but we doubt very much as no native historian has mentioned his name. Fergusson<sup>1</sup> supports his statement by putting forward the view that "it is hardly to be expected that natives should record the names of those who surpassed them in their own arts and needy Italian adventures were even less likely to have an opportunity of recording the works they executed in a strange and foreign country."

---

1 History of Eastern Architectures by Fergusson.

## TRADE AND COMMERCE

Capitalistic system of production was unknown in Mughal days. State was the biggest enterpriser and the consumer of its own goods. Means of transport and communication were far and scarce, and the goods produced were not easily transferable from one place to another. The output of cottage industry was not so large as to meet the demand of the State. Thus the Government maintained its own workshops and karkhanas. Their total number in Akbar's time was about 40. Each karkhana was placed under an official appointed by the Diwan of karkhanas and palace workshops. Abul Fazal writes that near the Royal Palace there were "more than hundred offices and workshops, each resembling a city or rather a kingdom." The most important of these were of carpets, shawls, gold embroidery, ivory works, cotton cloth, perfumes, jewellery and chinaware.

Cotton industries were encouraged but the artisans had not a good time as the State officials wanted commodities at a cheaper rate than the bazar prices. The goods produced were carried to and fro to other cities where the demand was greater. In the districts of Decca, Khandesh and Burhanpur, fine muslin was

made which was in great demand all over India. Similarly the carpet weavers of Agra, Lahore, Amritsar and Fatehpur Sikri had a flourishing business in this particular commodity, as the imported carpets from Persia, Kirwan and Khuzistan were not in a great demand. In the Royal workshops a single carpet twenty yards by length and six yards by breadth, was made at a cost of Rs. 1,800 or even more. (The estimate of its value at present would be more than Rs. 60,000).

The art of perfume making was greatly encouraged by Akbar. His palace and the Hall of Private audience were always scented with ambergis and aloewood, and incense was burnt daily in the morning in gold and silver censers. The Emperor greatly patronized the local arts and crafts, and articles of luxury were produced in the capital. This example was followed by the provincial governors who sent choicest articles which were produced in their locality as presents to the Emperor.

Cotton cloth was mostly produced in Lahore, Gujrat and Patna. Kashmir was noted for its shawls, fruits, wine, raw silk and saffron. The silk of Murshidabad was in a great demand all over India. The most important commercial cities of the empire were Lahore, Gujrat, Amritsar, Agra, Patna and Delhi.

Navy was not highly developed in those

days and people were afraid of undertaking a sea journey. Nearly all the sea routes were controlled by the Portuguese who carried on a flourishing trade with European countries. India maintained trade connections with foreign countries only in articles of luxury, such as wine, silk, velvet, silver, precious stones and chinaware which were the chief articles imported. The aristocratic class and the ruling chiefs were the only consumers of these commodities, as they had abundant money to live and spend lavishly. Others had neither the means nor they had any taste for these things.

In the west, Surat and in the east, Hooghly were important centres of trade. Besides these cargoes were sent in thousands from Diu, Daman, Broach, Goa, Calicut, Cochin, Chittagong and Satagaon.

India had trade connections with all her neighbouring countries. Afghanistan was under the possession of Delhi ruler, thus a flourishing trade was carried on through the North-West Frontier passes of Khyber and Bolan, with Persia, Bukhara, Herat, Samarkand and Turkistan. Hundreds of traders came from these countries with their caravans of merchandise goods every year. A commercial link was also maintained with Nepal, Bhutan, Burma, Sumatra, Java,

Ceylon, Siam and China. The chief articles of export were cotton, indigo, oil-seeds, sugar, spices and saffron.

Customs duties were not high, but foreigners were not allowed to take precious metals with them. The value of a rupee was estimated near about 2*sh.* 6*d.*

Banking business was transacted, but on a very small scale. The bankers were thoroughly honest and trustworthy. Travellers deposited with them thousands of rupees without any fear of fraudery. Hindus as a community were richer than the Muslims and held most of the trade and commerce in their hands, but they were lacking in political power. The system of Escheat prevented the accumulation of capital in private hands and this greatly hampered the economic progress of the country.

**Transport System.**—The system of easy transport and communication was not developed in Mughal times, and it was extremely a difficult task to undertake long journeys. The Mughals are renowned all over the world for their historical structures, magnificent palaces and forts, but in the field of transportation little improvement was made. No fine metalled roads were constructed, and there were few bridges. Palanquin, ekka gari, bullockcarts and horses were the principal

means of human conveyance, while mules and camels were used for goods transportation. The kings and ruling chiefs went on trained elephants, with all their paraphernalia of courtiers, servants and friends. According to Tarry's accounts roads and highways were quite secure. At all dangerous places, he mentions, special guards were provided by the State, who instructed the people to travel in caravans. But on the whole travelling was not considered to be very safe.

## SOCIETY

**Aristocracy.**—The Mughal nobility, which included the courtiers, the Jagirdars, the ruling chiefs and highly placed officials, led a life of ease and luxury. The law of escheat put a check on the accumulation of capital in private hands. Their incomes were considerably large ones, when taken into consideration the immensely high purchasing value of money. The necessities of life were cheap, and this class had an abundant money to squander. However, “spending, not boarding, was the dominant feature of the time.” The example set by the king and the ruling chiefs was followed by the nobility. A substantial number of horses and elephants were considered necessary for a noble to impress others of his dignified position, and so was the maintenance of a large number of servants which was an important feature of the domestic life. Offering presents to the emperor, and to one’s superior, whether in public or in official life, was a common practice. A great deal of their money was spent in buying expensive clothes and jewellery. Harem was an important feature of the private life of a king, or a noble. It is said that the harem of Akbar alone included 5,000 women. Drink, prostitution and gambling



were the common vices specially confined to the aristocracy. The only possible advantage secured from this class was, that their patronage of imported goods resulted in the opening of fresh channels for trade and commerce, and this paved the way for the future economic progress of the country. D. Pant describes them in his book 'Commercial Policy of the Mughals' as "veritable parasites devouring what the others produced—vampires sucking the life-blood of the nation." The statement is true to a certain extent when taken into consideration the poverty of the masses who were exploited.

**The Middle Class.**—Very little is known of the life of middle class, of their ways and manners. Their number must have been a small one as no contemporary historian has taken enough pains to record in detail their daily life and activities. Generally this class included petty shop-keepers, school teachers and small traders. They avoided ostentation on account of being harassed by the State officials whom they had to keep pleased. The general standard of their living was not high, and on the whole, life was not easy for these people.

**The Low Class.**—This class formed the bulk of the population. It included the peasants, the labourers, and the artisans. There were a

great number of slaves too and Akbar could do but little in abolishing the slavery totally. The lot of this class was the worst of all. The general standard of their living was very low, their clothing was scanty, even in winter their bodies were barely naked. This class was the worst sufferer in times of famines and epidemics. Thousands of people died due to food shortage, and through want of proper medical aid. There was no system of primary education for these people. Their earnings were very meagre, an unskilled labourer got only two dams a day, (a dam being equal to  $1/40$ th part of a rupee) while a skilled labourer got more than 7 dams a day. Labour had no free will of its own. The State being the biggest enterpriser could engage as much labour as it desired. If they did not render services voluntarily, they were forced by the officials and nobles to work for them. There was no immobility in labour, as the means of communication were scarce. In Akbar's time the State demand being fixed the peasantry might have led a better life, but on the whole, times were very bad for these people. Steeped down into ignorance, poverty, and class prejudices, this class was the backbone of the nation. The social evils such as child marriage, and Sati system still prevailed amongst the Hindus. Pilgrimage was equally popular amongst the Muslims and Hindus.

**Moreland's Verdict.**—It is a matter of great controversy between the different historians, whether the masses were better off than the present times or not. Mr. Moreland has given a very critical view of the life of this class in his book 'India at the Death of Akbar' when he says : "These glimpses of the condition of the people are not sufficient to furnish the basis of a minute comparison with the position at the present day. We cannot deduce from them whether the masses were somewhat better off or worse off than now, but to my mind they offered adequate justification for the statement that there has been no great qualitative change, and that from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century the great majority of the population of India were exceedingly poor, when judged by contemporary European standards which it must be remembered were lower than the standards which now prevail."

One may have reasons to differ from Mr. Moreland's statement, when taken in view the present price level of the country, and the immensely low purchasing value of money. A labourer getting two dams which was the least in Mughal days could buy six seers of wheat, whereas a labourer getting two rupees a day at present times can buy just the same amount.

It is wrong of Dr. Ishwari Prasad to say that Mr. Moreland has admitted that an ordinary

labourer of Akbar's times was better off than of present times, and that he had more to eat than he has now, as he repeatedly says, "the great bulk of population lived on the same economic plane as now; we cannot be sure whether they had a little more or little less to eat, but they probably had fewer clothes and they were certainly worse off in regard to household utensils and to some of the minor gratifications of life."

Rice, wheat and fish was the common diet of the people. Fish was found in abundance and that too at a very cheap rate. The necessities of life were simple and inexpensive. Tom Coryate, a traveller of the Mughal times, mentions that low prices not only prevailed in Hindustan but in the whole of Western Asia. It is interesting to note that during his long journey of ten months to India, Persia, and Iraq, he spent nearly £3 out of which 10 shillings were lost. The value of a rupee was somewhere near about 2*sh.* 6*d.*

**Position of Women.**—The position of women remained altogether a secluded one. No improvement was brought about socially or economically, as regards their status. The Purdah system, and the seclusion of women, hampered the advancement of social life. Education of a woman was an exception, rather than the rule. Her work was

wholly confined to household activities. Comparatively, Islam as a religion accorded better treatment to women than Hinduism with all its elaborate codes of the ancient sages. She had rights of inheritance, as well as greater liberty in matrimonial matters. But this did not affect the position of Hindu women. Intercaste marriages amongst the Hindus were not allowed. A Hindu woman changed her family with her marriage, having no legal claim on parental possessions. Widow remarriages were recognized by the State, but discouraged by the society. The practices of Sati, Child marriages and Dowry system were the common social evils of society. The Joint Hindu Family system continued to be a dominant feature of domestic life.

**Court Life.**—The Mughal Court was the centre of art and culture. In the court assembled the eminent musicians, the poets, the dancers, and the scholars from all parts of India. Beside these there were the court nobles, highly placed officials, and friends of the emperor. Each one attempted to increase his influence by fair or foul means. Intrigues and conspiracies were frequently hatched in the court. The Muslim aristocracy led a life of ease, luxury and idleness. The maintenance of harem, which included women from every caste and community, encouraged vice, immorality, and sensuousness. Such an

influence was bound to react upon their children, and it tended to degrade them morally, intellectually and physically. Unlike the Hindus their outlook on life was epicurean. It was more of a materialistic character, rather than of an intellectual or philosophical one.

On the festivals, the emperor displayed the splendour and magnificency of the court. On the first day of the month of Aban (15th October) which was the solar anniversary of Akbar, he was weighed against gold, silk, perfumes, copper, ghee, iron, rice, milk, salt and seven kinds of grain. Alms were distributed to the poor. Second time he was weighed on the Rajab day against tin, fruits, vegetables, lead and mustard oil. The emperor celebrated his birthday by giving donations to the various charitable institutions and grants of pardon to prisoners. Caged birds were set free. On these occasions the Emperor's Sawari was taken through the popular bazars, and streets of the capital. The official mode of addressing the emperor was an elaborate one which is given below.

“His Majesty Giti Sitani, Firdaus Hikani, Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad Akbar, Padshah Ghazi : King of the four quarters and of seven heavens ; celestial sovereign ; diadem of the sublime throne ; great genius of greatness

conferring ; fortune increaser of excellent horoscope ; heaven in comprehensiveness, earth in stability, lion hearted, clime capturer, lofty in splendour ; of active brain, searcher after knowledge ; rank breaking, lion rampant, exalter of dominions, ocean hearted of illustrious origin, a saintly sovereign, enthroned in the kingdom of reality and spirituality."

**Construction of Hindu Society and the Influence of Islam.**—The Hindu society was extremely a rigid one in its structure. It was composed of the inflexible divisions such as the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, the Shudras, and the Vaishs, the intermingling of which was impossible. The sense of unity which Islam offered was lacking in Hinduism. Whether in the economic, or in the social, or in the political field, the Hindu society was split up into groups. It was the Mughal rule which gave to the people for the first time a sense of political unity and a homogeneous administrative system.

Islam brought a message of Social Justice to the down-trodden low caste Hindus, who were looked upon as untouchables. Anti-Brahman movements inside and outside the Hindu society originated from time to time due to Islamic influence which appealed for the Brotherhood of Man. The influence of Islam made the defects and social evils, that

had crept into Hindu society, still more visible. The barriers of Hindu caste system formidable and unsurmountable as they were, proved fatal to the development of cultural unity with the Muslims. The Social differences were aggravated and the Hindu society stucked itself to its antediluvian rules and regulations, with the result that the progress of the society was greatly handicapped on the whole. Prejudices of caste led Hindus to look down upon those who embraced their religion, while a convert to Islam was warmly welcomed by that community. Criticizing the Hindu religion and its defects a Muslim writer observes: "If Hinduism had been religion in the true sense it would have absorbed the Muslim element or been absorbed by it. Its sole strength lay in the caste system which could neither inspire it with a proselytizing zeal, nor opened its ranks to penetration from outside."<sup>1</sup> It would be no exaggeration to say that the decline of Hinduism as a religion began with the advent of Islam. The present population of Muslims nearing 10 crores are mostly converts from Hindus, and so is with the Christians.

**Amalgamation of the two cultures.—**  
In spite of the differences existing amongst Hindus and Muslims in matters of religion, and



thought, a common culture developed reflecting the mind of two communities. Muslims who had settled here adopted India as their home, and became thoroughly Indianized. They had more in common with the local inhabitants, than with the Muhammedans coming from Persia and Arabia. They married the local women, and adopted the customs and usages of the time. The purity of their Persian blood was altogether lost. Hindus who became converts to Islam carried on their olden beliefs, superstitions and manners. In their domestic life, in matters of dress, food and entertainment, and in the celebration of festivals and marriages, both the communities evolved a uniform standard of living and thinking. Everywhere whether in the field of architecture, or in painting and literature, the confluent flow of two thoughts melted into one stream and a synthetic tendency developed between them. In the course of their daily life a new literary medium Urdu grew up which contained simple and adjustable words from Hindi as well as from Persian. New scientific systems were brought by Muslims which the Hindus incorporated with the olden ones. One borrowed from the other which it did not know. In the field of Astrology the Muslims adopted the Hindu system of calculation of numbers, and learnt from them the influence of various planets on the life of man.

Similarly in Astronomy, the two interchanged their technical terms and methods. In the field of medicine, the Hindu Vaidyas borrowed from the Muslims the use of metallic acids and the Muslims learnt from them the use of mountain herbs. The art of paper-making and enamelling, which was quite foreign to the natives, was introduced by the Muslims. In short, each community was indebted to another for its contribution. Observing on the evolution of Hindu-Muslim culture Tarachand writes in his book *'Influence of Islam on Indian Culture'*: "Not only did Hindu religion, Hindu art, Hindu literature, and Hindu science absorbed Muslim elements, but the very spirit of Hindu culture and the very stuff of Hindu mind reciprocated by responding to the change in every department of life." Under the influence of Islam religious movements originated from time to time which preached essentially against the evils of caste system. Teachers like Kabir and Nanak were universally accepted and adored by members of both the communities.

The Hindus learnt the Persian language and the Muslims learnt Hindi and produced excellent works in Hindi poetry. Scholars of Persian like Sheikh Gadai Dehlevi, Sheikh Abdul Wahid, Maulana Jalali Hindi and Abdur Rahim were Hindi-Persian poets.

**Hinduism Versus Islam.**—Though many abuses had crept into Hindu society, yet on the whole Hinduism was little affected by Islam. The upper class of Hindus, which were economically independent and intellectually advanced rejected Islam altogether. Conversion was entirely disapproved, and Hindu society as a whole, paid no heed to it, except amongst the poverty-stricken people of Kashmir and Bengal, where conversion went on with an increasing force. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru<sup>1</sup> though no authority on Mughal Rule yet a scholar of world history, observes: "But inspite of widespread conversion Hinduism in all its varieties continued as the dominant faith of the land, solid, exculsive, self-sufficient and sure of itself." The anti-Hindu policy of the Mughal emperors, excluding Akbar, and the insane course of religious persecution adopted by Aurangzeb made the Hindus conscious of their political rights. In fact it was the beginning of the growth of Hindu nationalism in Indian politics.

**Spirit of the Age and a Comparison.**—In the progress of scientific inventions and in the growth of political ideas India lagged far behind than the other nations of the world. The element of self-criticism of the governmental policy was lacking. No person, or any political body, had the right to criticize the actions of the

---

1    Discovery of India.

king or his ministers. The political rights of man were practically nil, and the voice of the monarch was supreme in all matters. It was an age of despotism in India, while in Europe there dawned a new era marked with revolutionary tendencies in all spheres of life, and the growth of scientific inventions. Pandit Nehru writes in his book "*Discovery of India*": "Akbar's century was 16th which saw in Europe the birth of a dynamic revolutionary advance in the life of humanity. With that discovery, Europe forged ahead, slowly at first but with an even increasing momentum till the nineteenth century it shot forward and built a new world—Asia static, dormant, still carried on in the old traditional way relying on man's toil and labour."

मसुरी  
MUSSOORIE.

115833

**This book is to be returned on the date last stamped.**

[illegible]

954.025

Koh

115833

अवाप्ति संख्या

Acc No. JD 1535

वर्ग संख्या

Class No. \_\_\_\_\_

पुस्तक संख्या

Book No. \_\_\_\_\_

लेखक

Author P. Kohli

शीर्षक

Title A Short history of AKBAR and  
Mughal Administration in India

निर्गम दिनांक 1 जघागुर्ग 11

JD 1535

954.025

Koh.

## LIBRARY

LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI

National Academy of Administration

MUSSOORIE

Accession No. 115833

1. Books are issued for 15 days only but may have to be recalled earlier if urgently required.
5. An overdue charge of 25 Paise per day per volume will be charged.
3. Books may be renewed on request at the discretion of the Librarian.
5. Periodicals, Rare and Reference books may not be issued and may be consulted only in the library.
5. Books lost, defaced or injured in any way shall have to be replaced or its double price shall be paid by the borrower.